



# THE COMMANDS OF CHRIST

**A series of 20 Bible Studies**

**prepared by**

**Dr. Andrew Corbett**

**Pastor of Legana Christian Church**



What  
JESUS  
Commanded

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Legana, Tasmania, Australia

Dr. Andrew Corbett is the pastor of Legana Christian Church and the President of ICI Theological College Australia.

# What JESUS Commanded

The teaching of Jesus Christ has shaped human history. Most of Western Society's Laws have drawn their inspiration from this set of teachings which we will refer to as *the commands of Christ*. These commands have become so ingrained in our society that they are now figures of speech: *Do unto others...Turn the other cheek...Go the extra mile...*are all citations from the commands that Christ gave.

Today the word "Christian" is loosely applied to buildings, businesses, certain ethnic races, a set of moral guidelines, and even a type of music. Yet this use of the word is often without any reference to what it's founder taught. It should be beneficial to discover exactly what

Jesus Christ taught and how this understanding can shape our lives.

This series is designed to take you through the New Testament. In this first module, we explore what Christ taught in the Beatitudes and His sermons and discover how these commands form the basis for Christian commitment and behaviour. These studies are designed to promote authentic Christ honouring lives. That is, by understanding and considering the application of Christ's commands to His followers, it is expected that you will be able to live lives that are more authentically "Christian".

Each study lesson is assessed through group discussion questions, multiple-choice questions, and written responses. This assessment should help you to live the kind of life Christ expects of His followers.

Dr. Andrew Corbett

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# What JESUS Commanded

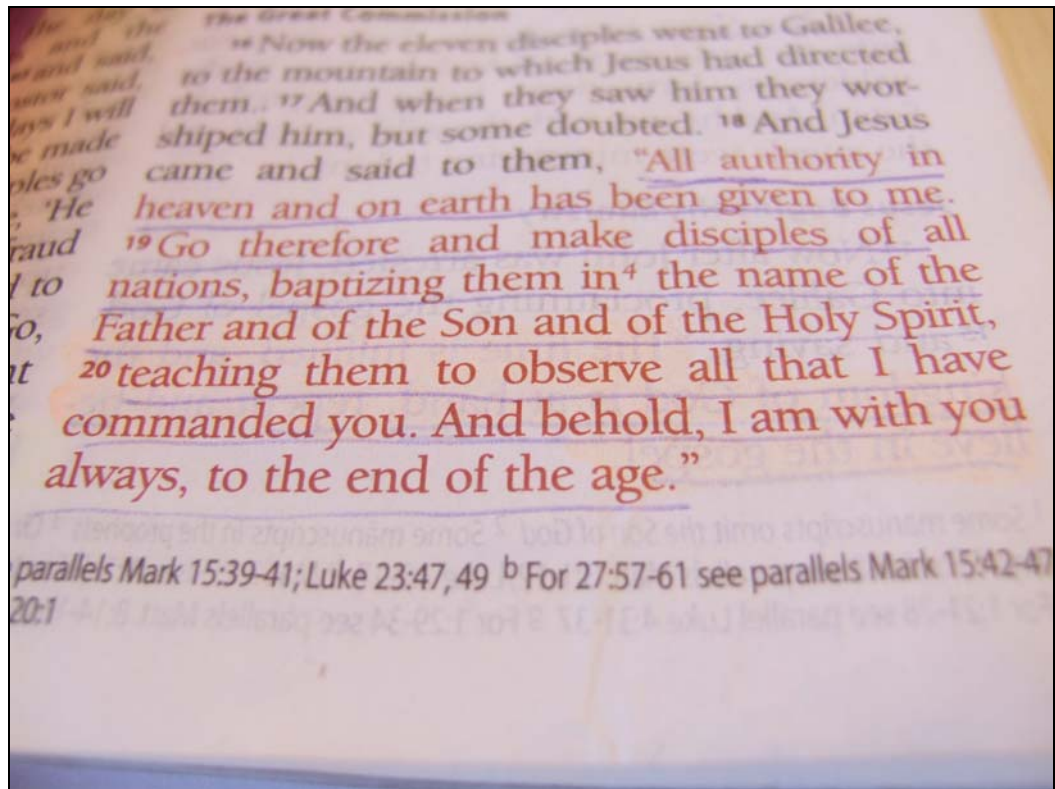
*For the law was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ.*

John 1:17

After a while, most Christians figure out that the Old Testament is about Law and the New Testament is about Grace. Some Christians then go on to assume that Grace means “no commandments!” (since there is no “Law” in the New Testament). Under the Old Covenant there were 10 Commandments, but how many are there in the New? The number might surprise you! (A clue: *it’s more than 500!*) But even more shocking to discover is not only that Jesus Christ issued commandments for His followers – but how many commandments He gave. And what He commanded he meant to be taught, studied and obeyed...

*teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age.*

Matthew 28:20



Study 1

# What it means to follow JESUS' commands

*And whoever does not take his cross and follow me is not worthy of me.*

Matthew 10:38

You can't be born a Christian. You can't simply call yourself a Christian. You don't become a Christian because you attend a Church or wear a cross. A Christian is one who *follows* Jesus Christ.

1. What *does* it mean to follow Christ?

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2. What did Jesus mean when He said that His followers must "*take up his cross*"? (Note Matthew 16:24)

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One of the first things that a would-be follower of Christ must do is clearly taught in the New Testament and yet it was the one thing that Christ could not do!

3. In preparing people to be ready to follow Christ, what was the preliminary message of John Baptist? (Matthew 3:2)
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4. How does this compare with Christ's first message to all those who would follow Him? (Matthew 4:17)
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Some people feel they could never change or "clean up their act" enough in order to begin following Christ. These people haven't yet apprehended God's grace.

5. How does Acts 11:18 and 2Timothy 2:25 correct this idea that repentance is merely human effort?
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Repentance is impossible without the grace of God. Grace from God enables a person to repent. To receive the grace of God begins with recognition of our need for it.

6. How do we begin to follow Christ? (Romans 10:13; Acts 2:21)
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You may feel that you are *not* right with God, but want to be. You don't have to clean up your act or become a better person- you just have to acknowledge your need for God and His forgiveness. You are just one prayer away from beginning to have peace with God!

## The Baptism JESUS commanded

Repentance leading to conversion as a follower of Christ is an utterly internal work. That is, when you become a follower of Christ you change on the inside- the way you think, the way you feel, your desires, your dreams, your goals, and hopes. But

there is an *outward* sign of what has taken place on the inside: *water baptism*.

7. Note Matthew 3:11. Why did John the Baptist say that he was baptising people?

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8. Therefore, noting Matthew 3:13-14, why was John reluctant to baptise Jesus? Circle the correct answers-

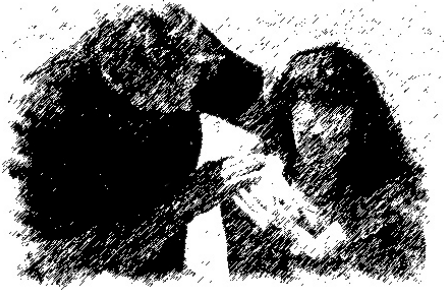
- (a) Because he had already baptised Jesus
- (b) Because Jesus was so sinful he was beyond repentance
- (c) Because Jesus was born and lived without sin, He had no need of repenting or baptising
- (d) Because Jesus was his second cousin he felt it was a conflict of interest to baptise him.

9. What reason did Jesus give John for being baptised? (Matthew 3:15)

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We are to live like Jesus. If you read a statement like that and think that it means we must all become tunic-wearing, wandering, preachers, then we miss the point. We must become like Jesus who was perfectly obedient to His Father. Jesus did His father's will. So must we.

Baptism involved the total immersion of the baptised into water. It is also somewhat symbolic, for example-



1. It is a picture of being *washed* from sin
2. It is an analogy of our *death* and burial
3. It is an enactment of our *resurrection*.

Washed. Death. Resurrection.

The Apostle, Paul, enlightens us about water baptism in Romans 6.

10. Note what Paul says in Romans 6:1-4 about the significance of water baptism. Why did he think water baptism was important based on this passage?

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He makes the assumption that everyone in the church have been water baptised. It was reasonable to assume this because water baptism was the first public demonstration of a person's commitment to follow Christ- and it still is. If you are yet to be water baptised since following Christ, this is your next significant step of public obedience in your walk with Christ.

**Following Christ's commands and water baptism...**

1. Baptism speaks of repentance. 2. Christ was baptised as an example to His followers. 3. Christ commanded that His followers be baptised. 4. It was assumed that every believer in the early church was water baptised. 5. Water baptism is a picture of washing, death and resurrection. 6. Water baptism does not save the follower of Christ- but it was commanded by Christ.

Study 2

# The Beatitudes JESUS commanded

*Seeing the crowds, he went up on the mountain, and when he sat down, his disciples came to him. And he opened his mouth and taught them, saying:*

Matthew 5:1-2

Read Matthew 5 –7. These three chapters of the New Testament form the basis for what we refer to as the “Beatitudes”. It is probably the most quoted section of the entire Bible and the most well-known section of all that Christ taught.

This study will help you to understand the basis for being a Christ-follower and how this demands an inner change in us.



The Beatitudes is regarded as the most profound sermon ever preached. The gracious words uttered by Christ have amazed and awed some of the greatest minds that have ever lived. The beauty of the simple, yet profound, statements uttered by Christ have been quoted more than any other words ever written or spoken. Even people unfamiliar with Scripture, yet living in the remnants of a culture that had its laws and values shaped by the Bible are familiar with “the Golden Rule”, “the meek shall inherit the earth” and so on.

But at the time when Christ uttered these words many, if not most, of His hearers would have been outraged by what He said! They may well have considered Christ’s words out of place, insensitive, and totally inappropriate. It’s difficult today for us to imagine the passion with which these words were spoken and the highly charged emotional response in which they were received. Perhaps if we can understand the context in which they were given we may derive an higher respect for Christ and His teaching.



Historians tell us that shortly before Christ preached this sermon, the Romans had just massacred many in the surrounding villages. Philip Yancey discusses this in his book- "*The Jesus I Never Knew!*" and says that this sermon was perhaps the most courageous message ever given.

1. What do you think Yancey means?

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(Knowing some of the context to this Sermon on the Mount, how does this change your understanding of what Christ said?)

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## The Blessings JESUS revealed

Christ introduced His sermon on the mount with a series of statements about the benefits of heeding His teaching. It's worth noting that Christ spoke blessings over His hearers before He commenced preaching. This in itself is a powerful lesson for how we should preach to others.

2. In order to receive the full blessing of following Christ's teaching, Jesus commences by stating the most necessary thing needed in order to begin to follow Him. What did Jesus say this was in Matthew 5:3?

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3. What did Jesus say would be the benefit of such a humbling? (Matt. 5:3)

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4. Each of the four Gospels are written to different audiences. Match the Gospel to its originally intended audience -

Matthew \_\_\_

\_\_\_ Written to **Romans** who were impressed with power and action. This is why its opening chapter is crammed with many accounts of Christ's miracles and totally skips His genealogy since this didn't impress Romans. It also paints a very favourable picture of Roman centurions and their interaction with Christ

Mark \_\_\_

\_\_\_ Written to **Hebrews** (Israelites) familiar with Old Testament language, especially the Prophecies about the coming Messiah. This is why it contains many phrases like, "*This took place to fulfill what was spoken by the prophet*". This Gospel's emphasis was Jesus as the Prophesied Messiah of the Jews.

Luke \_\_\_

\_\_\_ Written to **Greeks** who were impressed with cleverness. This Gospel is organised around 7 miracles, 7 "I AM" statements, and 7 sermons of Christ. It emphasises the deity of Christ.

John \_\_\_

\_\_\_ Written to **Gentiles** who were impressed with spirituality and mysticism. This is why this Gospel emphasises the prayerfulness of Christ and the mysticism surrounding Him such as fulfilled prophecies, miracles, supernatural wisdom, and prophetic insights.

One of the traits of Matthew's Gospel is his use of the word "heaven" instead of "God". While other Gospel writers refer to the *Kingdom of God*, Matthew refers to the same concept as the *Kingdom of Heaven*.

5. What type of “mourning” might Jesus have been referring to in Matthew 5:4?

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6. Note Matthew 5:5. Select which words best define “meek”-

- (a) Weak and pathetic
- (b) Humble and gentle
- (c) Indecisive and uncertain

The promise of “*inherit the earth*” may better be rendered as “*inherit the Land*” (note Exodus 32:13). At the time Christ uttered these amazing words, there was a group of Hebrews known as *Zealots* who believed that Israel could only fully inherit the promise of possessing their Land once again by using bloodshed against their enemies.

7. How can we satisfy our hunger and thirst for righteousness? (Matt. 5:6)

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8. Even though Matthew 5:7 is considered a global remedy for world-peace, how might it have originally angered many of its original audience?

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9. Spoken originally to people who were used to conforming to external rules, how would what Christ said in Matthew 5:9 been so radical?

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10. Is Jesus implying in Matthew 5:10 that His followers will probably be persecuted? Is it possible to follow Christ and never be persecuted?

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11. What does Christ seem to imply will happen to all those who choose to follow Him based on Matthew 5:11-12?

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Christ calls people to follow and obey Him. He commences this by talking about the blessings that result from doing so. We notice though, that He makes it clear that the purpose of following Him is not the blessings, but the desperate recognition of our true condition before God and our dire need to be made right with Him. But the blessings! Oh the wonder that God not only allows us to follow Him – but blesses us for doing so!

*Amen.*

Study 3

# The Influence JESUS commanded

I once had a young man who had been attending church for a few weeks come to my home to see me. He said that he had enjoyed coming to church but had some questions he needed answered before he could commit his life to Christ. He had felt some pressure from his girlfriend who was trying to stop him becoming “religious”. “If I become a Christian does anyone have to know?” “What do you mean?” I asked. “Would I have to witness if I became a Christian?” he added. I answered his question and he thanked me and left. I never saw him again.

1. Why did Jesus say that His followers were to be like “salt” in Matt. 5:13?

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2. How does Matthew 5:16 reveal what Christ meant by “light” in Matthew 5:14-15 and how does this affect the way we follow Christ?

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Followers of Christ are called to care. Throughout the past few hundred years Christians like John Newton, William Wilberforce, William Booth and Dietrich Bonhoeffer have become aware that Christ-followers have a lot to offer their societies by correcting injustices, helping the poor, providing health care and schooling. None of these men forsook the preaching of the Gospel and none of them thought that they could save anyone merely by their efforts.

3. According to Matthew 5:16, what will cause people to glorify God?

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4. Although we are saved by grace through faith in Christ (Eph. 2:8-9), what does Ephesians 2:10 say we saved *for*?

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5. What does Peter say will be the result when people see our “good deeds/works”? (1Peter 2:12)

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# The Law JESUS commanded

When the New Testament speaks of “Law” it usually refers to the Law that God gave through Moses to Israel. This is generally called “the Law of Moses” (eg. Luke 2:22; John 7:23). The Law of Moses had components: *Food Laws*, *Civil Laws*,

*Ceremonial Laws* and *Moral Laws*.

6. Match the law with the type of Law it is-

**(i) Food Law**

\_\_\_ Ex. 22:9 For every breach of trust, whether it is for an ox, for a donkey, for a sheep, for a cloak, or for any kind of lost thing, of which one says, ‘This is it,’ the case of both parties shall come before God. The one whom God condemns shall pay double to his neighbour.

**(ii) Civil Law**

\_\_\_ Ex. 20:17 “You shall not covet your neighbour’s house; you shall not covet your neighbour’s wife, nor his male servant, nor his female servant, nor his ox, nor his donkey, nor anything that *is* your neighbour’s.”

**(iii) Ceremonial Law**

\_\_\_ Lev. 11:5 And the rock badger, because it chews the cud but does not part the hoof, is unclean to you.

**(iv) Moral Law**

\_\_\_ Ex. 29:18 and burn the whole ram on the altar. It is a burnt offering to the LORD. It is a pleasing aroma, a food offering\* to the LORD.

7. How does Hebrews 10:1 describe the Food/Civil/Ceremonial laws?

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The Moral law is best thought of as the Ten Commandments and those aspects of Moses which expand on them. For example, while the Ten Commandments state that murder is wrong, it goes to explain when a killing should be regarded as accidental (“manslaughter”) and when a killing should be regarded as a violation of the Moral law. Similarly, while the Ten Commandments state that adultery (sexual activity without marriage) is wrong, it expands this to detail what kinds of sexual activity are inappropriate (this includes homosexuality, incest, bestiality, and paedophilia).

8. Select the correct answer that shows us that the Moral law of the Law has been carried over into the New Testament -

- a) This was probably the aspect the Law of Moses that Jesus said He was *not* abolishing
- b) All of the Moral laws of the Ten Commandments are repeated in the New Testament (Do not murder. Do not lie. Do not steal. Do not commit idolatry. Do not Covet. Honour your Father and Mother. Do not commit sexual sin. All except the law of the Sabbath which was a type of the rest to be had in Christ [Hebrews 4])
- c) This is the law that Paul referred to in Romans 2 as being written on each of our consciences, therefore it is still applicable today
- d) All of the above.

9. What role does this law have in our salvation? (Note Romans 7)

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10. Based on Matthew 5:19-20, how did Christ feel about the Moral law?

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Following Christ means that we become keepers of the Moral law – not because we are trying to earn our salvation but - because our salvation has caused His Law to be written on our hearts (Jer. 31:33).

*Amen.*

Study 4

# The Love for Others JESUS commanded

*“You have heard it said...”* taught Jesus, *“But I say unto you...”* He added. After having just finished teaching that the Law was good and that He was not abolishing any aspect of it, but was rather going to fulfil it, He now establishes something that most Christians never realise.



## The Love for brothers JESUS commanded

Love is the hallmark of the follower of Christ. But Christ raises the standards for how we are to love. In many religions there are laws about not doing harm to people as a way of being loving. For example, Confucius taught, “*What you do not wish upon yourself,*

*extend not to others.*” But Christ took this from being a *passive* statement to being an *active* statement as we will see soon.

Having just taught that His standards are *higher* than the Old Covenant Law, Jesus now reveals the principle behind all of God’s Laws: *love*. It would be wrong to think that we either live by Law or by Love (note what Jesus said in Matthew 5:19-20).

1. In First Corinthians 9:21 what kind of Law does the Apostle Paul say that he is under?

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2. According to Galatians 6:2 how does Paul say that believers can fulfil this Law? (Note Romans 13:10 and Galatians 5:14)

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3. Read Matthew 5:21-22. The Law of Moses prohibited murder, without dismissing this, what did Jesus teach was His standard for how we *feel* toward those who aggravate us?

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Consider the following excerpt from an article by Dan Kimball-

**Six Perceptions of the Unchurched**, by Dan Kimball

*Every now and then, we experience an epiphany of some sort that drastically changes our life's course. For me, it's an extremely vivid memory of what happened when I took the time to step outside the busyness of ministry and listened to some college students from what was known to be one of the more anti-Christian campuses in California. It was these "pagan" students who gave me such incredible hope for the Church.*

*I was leading a young adults ministry we had recently started at the church I was on staff with at the time, and occasionally during worship gatherings, we showed man-on-the-street video interviews to set up the sermon. For an upcoming message series on evangelism, we decided to go to this college campus to interview students and hear firsthand their thoughts about Christianity. We asked two questions: "What do you think of when you hear the name 'Jesus'?" and "What do you think of when you hear the word 'Christian'?"*

*When they answered the first question, the students smiled and their eyes lit up. We heard comments of admiration such as, "Jesus is beautiful," "He is a wise man, like a shaman or a guru," "He came to liberate women." One girl even said, "He was enlightened. I'm on my way to becoming Christian."*

*What an incredible experience! These students on the very campus I kept hearing was so "pagan" talked about Jesus with great passion. However, when we asked the second question, the mood shifted. We heard things like, "Christians and the Church have messed things up," and "The Church took the teachings of Jesus and turned them into dogmatic rules." One guy said, "Christians don't apply the message of love that Jesus gave," then jokingly added, "They all should be taken out back and shot."*

This seems to highlight the incredible damage done to the Name and Cause of Christ when His followers don't keep these teachings of Jesus.

4. How did Jesus say people would be able to identify His followers? (Jn. 13:35)

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5. According to John 13:34, how are Christ's followers to particularly love each other?
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## The Love for marriage JESUS commanded

God invented passion, romance, and intimacy. He is not against these things. But He has ordained the boundaries for their appropriate expression: *marriage*. This is because such physical intimacy with another person is the highest expression of physical

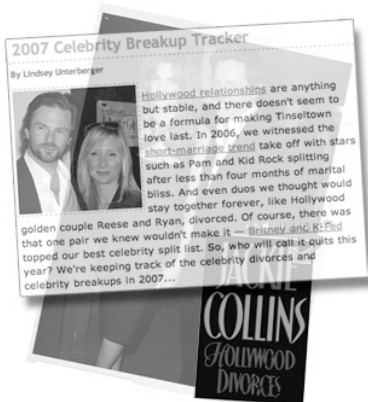
love between two people and therefore demands the highest physical commitment between two people: *marriage*. Not only this, marriage is an picture of God. The union that a husband and wife experience is a type of the unity within the Trinity between the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. God takes His gift of marriage very seriously!

6. How does Hebrews 13:4 emphasise just how seriously God regards marriage and wants us to do the same?

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Some might argue, *What would Jesus know about marriage? He was single!*

7. How does Ephesians 5:22-32 refer to Christ?



Christ teaches that marriage is not something to be entered into lightly. Under the Old Covenant, a man could divorce his wife for almost any reason. This readiness to divorce completely undermined God's intention for marriage. Marriage is meant to be a life-long union between a man and a woman who are prepared to work through difficulties and challenges under God.

8. How did Jesus reinforce this idea of marriage in Matthew 19:3-8?

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9. We sometimes think that it is only our actions that are the evidence of sin in our lives. But Jesus commanded that we not only guard our actions. Note Matthew 5:27-28 and discover what Christ also said was sin-

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Someone has said that if living with sins forgiven, but in miserable circumstances (sickness, hardship, poverty, adversity, calamity) for 85 years without relief, seemed hard, it should be compared to the 85 million ages in the life to come that will be enjoyed in total pleasure- knowing that God will never condemn us!

10. How did Jesus reinforce this concept in Matthew 5:28-29?

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Some people are now teaching that “Hell” is not real. They argue that a loving God could never send anyone to such a place of eternal torment. Instead, they argue, “Hell” is a metaphor (a word picture) for *no longer existing*.

11. How long did Jesus say the torment in Hell would last for in Matthew 25:41? (Note why God created Hell based on this same verse.)

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12. According to Matthew 5:31-32 what is one of the grounds for divorce, and what are the consequences of divorcing?

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The Love for honesty  
**JESUS**  
commanded

Followers of Christ represent Him in the way they speak. We are to speak like Christ in respect to how we handle the truth, speak of others, and express our feelings.

13. How does James 3:2 describe the person who guards their mouth? (Note Eph. 4:29)

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14. How does James 5:12 reiterate what Christ said in Matthew 5:33-37?

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15. Which aspect of the way you speak requires the most attention to conform it to these commands of Christ?

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*Father, help me to love, to speak, and to feel in ways that honour Christ and bless my family, friends, colleagues, church-family and community.  
Amen.*

Study 5

The Love for enemies  
**JESUS**  
commanded

*But I say to you, Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you,*

Matthew 5:44

We have seen that Christ taught a higher “law” than the Old Covenant Law. Christ’s Law is the *Law of Love*. Many religious teachers had taught that people should love, but the most outstanding characteristic of Christ’s teaching, which makes His teaching unique, is how He commanded enemies to be loved. Not only did Christ teach this, He lived it.

## EYE FOR AN EYE

The Law of Moses (Ex. 21:24; Lev. 24:20; Deut. 19:21) regarding an “*eye for an eye*” was intended to be a warning *not* to hurt someone else. It challenged the Israelites to be considerate of others and to know that if they carelessly hurt someone, they deserved to be hurt in a similar way. But over time, the Pharisees

had interpreted these passages as *a right to take revenge*. That's why Jesus said, "You have heard that it was *said*..."

1. How did Jesus interpret correctly the original Law of Moses in Matthew 5:38-39, and then lift it to a higher standard? Choose the correct answer-
    - a) By teaching that we are not to be door-mats for people to walk over us and we are therefore right to take revenge on those who hurt us.
    - b) By teaching that revenge could only be carried out in His Name after pronouncing the wrath of God upon our enemies.
    - c) By teaching that we should not seek to harm anyone, even if they have deliberately harmed us.
  2. How would a reading of Leviticus 19:18 have showed the Pharisees that even the Law of Moses did not agree with their interpretation of "*an eye for an eye*"?
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Perhaps the first and most natural response we feel when ever someone hurts us, is to hurt them. Very shortly after I became a Christian, in my high school years, I was confronted in the school yard with someone who had heard that I had become a Christian. This person had a reputation as the school bully. He had come to test my new found religion. He did this by mocking my commitment to Christianity, to the supporting jeers of those watching. He then pushed me and drew no response. Then with a clenched fist he punched my face, knocking me to the ground. As I lay on the asphalt looking around at the laughter of my 'friends', I looked up at the little bully who had just struck me. I felt no desire for revenge or even malice toward him. In fact, I was struck by a great sense of pity and

sorrow for this lost soul. What struck me so hard was the thought that in all my school days no one had ever dared to hit me (due to my size and physique I was never a target for bullies) and that if this had happened just days before I probably would have responded by thumping the living daylights out of this kid. But something had changed. I was different. My heart had changed.

3. The Old Covenant seemed to depend upon the written law to make people good. It failed. But it looked forward to the day when the Christ would come. Based on Jeremiah 31:31-34; 32:37-41; Ezekiel 36:26, what did the Bible say would happen to those who would accept Christ?

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4. Consider what Christ said in Matthew 5:39 and note the list of humiliating acts that Paul lists in 2Corinthians 11:20. What is common to both verses?

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For a right-handed person to strike a person on their right-cheek requires that they use the back of their hand. This was incredibly insulting. To publicly slap a person with the back of your hand was to grossly humiliate them. Thus, Christ is saying far more than just “don’t hit back”.

5. What could He have meant when He taught us to “turn the other cheek”?
- a) Even if someone humiliates us as they hurt us, we are not to do the same to them.
  - b) Even though we could hurt someone and justify it with “Well they started it!”, we should not.
  - c) We should relinquish our right to revenge, and demonstrate that we will not be vengeful.
  - d) All of the above.

## DO NOT RESIST THE ONE WHO IS EVIL

I was having a coffee with a minister some time ago when he opened up and shared about a deep hurt he had been carrying for nearly all of his life which led him into prolonged battles with depression and nagging thoughts of inferiority. As a teenage Christian in new High School he had been brought up in a home which stressed the need to obey the Bible and be a good witness. Mindful of Christ’s words in Matthew 5:38-39, this person had never retaliated to any aggravation that had come his way. But this was sorely taken advantage of when he began to be bullied and severely physically abused every day of his 7<sup>th</sup> grade year at High School. I asked him why he didn’t tell his parents or his teachers what had happened. He said that he felt that this would have been a violation of what Christ taught in Matthew 5:38-39. The result was that some forty years later he was still deeply traumatised and somewhat socially dysfunctional.

6. When Jesus said not to resist the one who does evil (Matthew 5:39) did He say that we should not *defend* either ourselves, or others, against injustice?
-

If an offence is a crime, or an act of injustice, the Scriptures do not apply the teaching of Christ to *turn the other cheek* to mean that injustice should be encouraged or not dealt with.

7. What does Romans 13:4 teach about God's expectation for those who promote injustice?
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If you are being victimised by another, Scripture forbids us taking matters into our own hands to seek vengeance. Instead, we should cast all our cares onto the Lord (Psalm 43:1; 1Peter 5:7), report any illegal activity to the relevant authorities (Rom. 13:1-4), and work toward defending the oppressed (Psalm 72:4; Prov. 31:9; and perhaps, James 1:27).

Jesus modelled what He taught about not seeking revenge and enduring humiliation.

8. Read the prophecy about Christ in Isaiah 50:6 and record what it predicted about how Christ would respond to His enemies-
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9. Have you ever applied the *principle* of Matthew 5:40? If so, describe-
- 



In the days that Jesus spoke these words, Roman soldiers frequently forced civilians to carry their gear (their cloak and any other items). This generally would have produced hatred from the Jews towards the Romans. But Christ's teaching about loving your enemies rather than despising them really hit home when He told His Jewish audience to not only cooperate with their Roman oppressors, but to *willingly* cooperate - and then demonstrate that loving willingness by doing more than asked!

10. Select the option that best fits what Christ is saying in Matthew 5:41-
- a) if someone we don't like asks us for a favour we are allowed to refuse them.
  - b) if someone who has been unkind to us asks us to help them we can remind them in Jesus' Name that they were unkind to us and now they would reap what they've have sown and not help them.
  - c) if someone with some authority over us (employer, parent, teacher, police, government) demands something of us we comply with their request to the letter of the law and no more.
  - d) if someone we like asks us to help them we should do all we can to help as long as it doesn't inconvenience us.
  - e) none of the above.

11. Consider Matthew 5:42. Speculate how our society would regard Christians if we all applied that verse-

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12. Read Matthew 5:43-47. If you were to apply these verses to your life, how would you have to change from the way you behave now?

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It seems that Matthew 5:48 is a statement by Christ about good you have to be to be perfect: *as good as God!* Of course this is impossible for any person to be that perfect. But, at the very least Christ has given all who would follow Him an understanding of what the goal looks like: *to be like God*. May God grant us the heart, the will, and the ability to become all He wants us to be and to completely obey Him in the process.

*Amen.*

Study 6

The Love for the needy  
**JESUS**  
commanded

1. What is the similar message of Christ found in these verses: Matthew 5:12; 5:46; 6:1, 2, 4, 5, 6, 16, 18; 10:42?

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Life matters, teaches Jesus, because one day we will all stand before God and account for how we have lived. Christ teaches that on this Day of Judgment God will reward or punish for all eternity based on what we do now in this life. We have already seen that the criteria God uses to judge a person is how they treat others, especially their enemies! Now we will see that Christ taught that how we responded to the needs around us is a major part in how God will deal with us for eternity.

2. When Christ taught about being “rewarded in heaven”, could He have meant that we ‘earn’ our salvation from sin and adoption by God based on how we live?

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It appears that God’s judgment is in two stages. The first stage is the identification of those who are His (Revelation 20:11-13). This is the revealing of all those who are in the “Book of Life”. The second stage seems to be degrees of rewards or punishment based on what we have done (also Revelation 20:11-13). In Christ’s beatitudes He seems to be using the concept of ‘rewards’ in the sense of the second phase of God’s Judgment.

3. What is being described in 2Corinthians 5:10?

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4. Christ seems to make a really big issue about *Who* we are to impress. How is this reinforced in Matthew 6:1?

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5. Does Matthew 6:2-4 contradict Matthew 5:16? Explain.
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## Prayer

Jesus addresses ‘public’ praying in Matthew 6:5. Praying in public is not about impressing those around you with how “spiritual” you are. It’s also not a competition- *he who prays the longest prayers wins!*

6. What kind of praying is the “best” kind of praying according to Jesus?  
(Matthew 6:6)

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Read Matthew 6:7. Notice what Jesus is commanding here-

- (i) **Do not use mindless phrases over and over again in your praying.**

(I was once in a prayer meeting where some very nervous young man used the expression “*Father Lord God*” in every sentence of his five minute prayer! This is mindless repetition.)

- (ii) **Do not pray like you don’t know God** (“*as the Gentiles do*”).

Christians are called to know the will of God and pray it! When we are uncertain about what God’s will we can be certain that His will is to pray for wisdom!

- (iii) **Do not pray long public prayers- one maybe two sentences is sufficient.** (“*for they think they will be heard for their many words*”)

Praying is not preaching.

## The Disciples' Prayer

Perhaps the most famous prayer in the Bible is the one in Matthew 6:9-13.

7. Match the corresponding word with the concept of praying that Jesus taught in this passage-

Matthew 6: _ _	Protection :
Matthew 6: _ _	Forgiveness :
Matthew 6: _ _	Surrender and dedication :
Matthew 6: _ _	Provision :
Matthew 6: _ _	Direction :

8. According to Matthew 6:14-15, when will God forgive us?

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9. Did Jesus teach that *fasting* would be an optional discipline for His followers based on Matthew 6:16-18? Explain. And, how would the type of fasting that Jesus described differ what the type of fasting that was going on in His day?

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*Amen.*

Study 7

# Handling Money The Way JESUS commanded

*"Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy, and where thieves break in and steal."*

Matthew 6:19

Jesus had more to say about money and its use than He had to say about hell! Money is generally something that represents our life. We exchange money for parts of our life: *our time and effort*. What we do with it says an awful lot about us. As we look at this vital topic of what Jesus taught about money and the way it should be handled we will be looking at what might be one of the most important aspects of how we live. The way we handled money will either be a great source of blessing or pain for us.

*It beckons and woos us. It tantalizes and seduced us. It sucks us into its grasp and wreaks havoc in our lives. And we still deny its sinister power.*

Bill Hybels, *Honest To God*, page 153

## A MATTER OF FOCUS

Money is power. It is a power that can seduce, blind, and deceive.

1. Note what the Scriptures say is the root of all kinds of evil based on 1Timothy 6:10- (select one)
  - (a) Money
  - (b) Pride
  - (c) The love of money



Christ warned against being seduced by love for money especially where it becomes our primary focus (the thing we live for). Where we are besotted with the pursuit of money, the Bible refers to it as “greed”.

2. What is the last of the Ten Commandments? (Exodus 20) Describe the connection between this commandment and greed.

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3. What does Colossians 3:5 call “covetousness” or “greed”? What are we to do with it based on this verse?

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While we live in a world that demands the use of money, and rewards fame and effort with it, we are not to make it our focus. Money must serve us rather than the other way around!

*What’s fascinating is that as our financial needs are supplied, our appetite for money tends to increase rather than diminish.*

Bill Hybels, page 154

## A MATTER OF THE HEART

Christ taught that what we do with money reveals what is really in our hearts (Luke 12:34). The love of money has the power to grip a heart.

4. What did Christ teach was a way to ensure that money did not rule our hearts? (Mark 10:21 and note Luke 19:8)

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5. What instructions did Paul ask Timothy to pass on to those who were rich? (Note 1 Timothy 6:18)

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6. What does Psalm 62:10 warn us about?

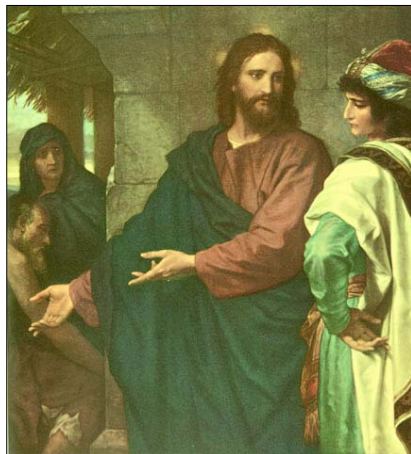
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While we all need money, it's vitally important that we are not driven by a lust for it. Generosity seems to be the antidote to covetousness and greed. Whenever we are reluctant to share or give it should perhaps sound an alarm that we need to check the condition of our hearts.

7. Note Ecclesiastes 5:10.

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8. What did John the Baptist tell soldiers in Luke 3:14? How should we apply this to our lives?

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9. Read Luke 16:14 and note why the Pharisees were so opposed to Christ's teaching about money (note verse 13 as well)-

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10. What characteristic is necessary for anyone who desires to be a leader in the church according to 1Timothy 3:3?

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## **MONEY AS A BLESSING**

While money can result in great misery for those who are consumed by it, it can also be a great blessing. We need to be careful not to assume that those who are rich are the ones who are consumed by money. It could well be that those who become rich have done so because they are not ruled by it! And, on the other hand, those who are poor *may* idolise money. Levels of wealth are not necessarily the indicator of how much money is loved.

11. What does Ecclesiastes 10:19 claim money can do?

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*Many people have an attitude that says, "All I need is enough money to put food on my table." Well, that is actually a selfish way to think. Imagine if you were in the position to put food on the tables of countless families.*

Brian Houston, *You Need More Money*, page 17

Brian Houston notes in his book (*You Need More Money*) that money can be a blessing in the following ways-

- *It says to land, "I can own you."*
- *Money says to vision, "I can fulfil you."*
- *Money says to buildings, "I can build you"*
- *Money says to things, "I can buy you."*
- *Money says to a missionary, "I can support you."*
- *Money says to the poverty-stricken, "I can feed you."*
- *Money says to opportunity, "I can accept you."*



Money should work for us rather than us working for it. But if we get ourselves into unreasonable debt we position ourselves to be servants of money. A sad, but typical, story is of the young person who gets their first job and borrows to buy their first car, a 1978 Toyota. They are barely able to make the monthly repayments but as soon as they get a pay rise they trade-up their car for a 1984 Mitsubishi and even consequently even larger monthly repayments. After struggling for months then years to try and repay their car loan, they get another pay rise and trade-up again for a 1992 Holden. Rather than using their money wisely, debt has deceptively crept in to choke what could have been a huge blessing.

Contrast this with the refugee who arrived with little grasp of English. To support his small family, his wife and daughter, he set up a roadside fruit and vegetable stall. Soon he was making \$24,000 a year. With that money he saved \$16,000 and used the other \$8,000 to accommodate and feed his family in a one room apartment. After doing this for four years, he went to a Bank Manager with a business plan and a deposit of \$64,000 to borrow the money needed to buy a warehouse and establish a fruit and vegetable distribution process. Within just a few years he was making \$1,000,000 a year.

12. At what point in this story could this refugee be described as “rich”? Explain.

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*Earn as much as you can. Save as much as you can. Give as much as you can.*

John Wesley

13. How did Christ say money could be used in Luke 16:9?

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In Luke 16:10-12, Christ indicates that money is a symbol of responsibility. How we use it indicates how we would handle increased responsibility. We are told by Christ to use money wisely to both be a blessing to the poor and an influence to the ungodly.

14. Why was the wise character of Ecclesiastes 9:15 soon forgotten?

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We should therefore avoid “bad” debt (money borrowed for expenses rather than for investments). We should save money.

14. What does Christ seem to be commending about how money should at least be handled in Matthew 25:27?

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15. What did Christ say we should do in Matthew 23:23?

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16. Christ-followers should be generous. What promise did Christ give His followers about the benefits of generosity? (Luke 6:38)

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17. Why was the servant of Matthew 25:21 commended and what would he have had to have done in order to earn this commendation?

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May God give us the wisdom to handle money wisely and use it for His glory, the benefit of others and dignity that we deserve. May we know when enough is enough and when to go for more.

*Amen.*

Reflect on what you consider Christ is *commanding* you to do based on what you have studied thus far.

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Offer a written heartfelt prayer to God for the strength to live the way He wants you to-

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Study 8

# The Golden Rule JESUS commanded

(Matthew 7:1-12)

Christianity is not only about following Jesus it's also about becoming *like* Jesus. This involves us changing and growing. As we each become like Christ we will reflect Him in different ways. Becoming like Christ doesn't mean we have to wander around in a seamless robe and talk with fishermen for the rest of our lives! It means that we pursue those things that Christ pursued and imitate His heart toward others.

1. According to John 5:30 what was Christ pursuing?

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2. What are some of the things that hinder us from pursuing the same thing?

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Christ now completes His Sermon on the Mount with some of the most practical instructions the follower of Christ will ever receive. Christian maturity cannot be measured without reference to *these* commands of Christ.

3. Compare Matthew 7:1 and Luke 6:37. In what way does Luke 6:37 bring balance to Matthew 7:1?

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4. Based on Matthew 7:1-2 select the correct answer from the choices below-
- (a) No one should ever judge anyone, including those in courts of Law
  - (b) Only make a judgment when you have all the facts and would be prepared to be judged in the same way
  - (c) Even when people are committing sin which is injuring people and being covered up, they shouldn't be condemned



5. Based on Matthew 7:3-4, what kind of attitude would be necessary for us to have to be made aware of any logs in our eyes?

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6. How might we best remove the “logs” from our own eyes?

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The Jews had a word to describe someone committing what they considered to be the worst kind of sin: “a dog” (note Matthew 15:26; Philippians 3:2; Revelation 22:15). Jesus used this word in the same way. It seems to have described someone who had little regard for God’s Law and would much rather be ruled by their various appetites. The heart condition of these people is so hard toward the things of God that anything to with God or His Word is mocked.

7. What are we told *not* to do in Matthew 7:6?

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Jesus taught something never understood before. While Israel had related to God as Lord, Creator, Law-Giver, Judge, they had not known Him as *Father*. Jesus, the eternal Son of God, wanted people to know that His Father could be their Father. He wanted people to come closer to God as their Heavenly Father. But Christ went further than merely describing God as Father, He described what kind of Father He was.

8. If we really believed Matthew 7:7-8, how different do you think we would live?

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9. Based on Matthew 7:9-11 what do think Jesus wanted us to know about God? How does this knowledge change how you regard God?

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## THE GOLDEN RULE

Perhaps if it was possible to live a “minimal” Christian life then Matthew 7:12 would be a contender for that minimum standard.

10. In what way is Matthew 7:12 a positive command rather than a negative command?

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11. Describe three ways you could implement this verse tomorrow-

- (i) \_\_\_\_\_
- (ii) \_\_\_\_\_
- (iii) \_\_\_\_\_

*Amen.*