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Citizens of the Love Kingdom

Key References: Exodus 20:1-17; Matthew 22:34-40; John 14:15; *Patriarchs and Prophets*, chap. 27, pp. 303-314; *The Bible Story* (1994), vol. 2, pp. 153-158; vol. 10, pp. 161-164, 128-131; Our Beliefs, nos. 19, 14, 11.















power**text**

"But this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, says the LORD: I will put My law in their minds, and write it on their hearts; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people" (Jeremiah 31:33).

Sabbath

DO Do the activity on page 61.

power**point**

God is writing His law of love on our hearts to prepare us for citizenship in heaven.

When the apostle John and Ellen Harmon had their visions of heaven, do you think they wondered who would be there: who would be prepared to enter and become citizens of God's kingdom?

Brad loved spending time with Uncle Darren, especially when they went out to eat at a restaurant! However, today would be exceptionally meaningful.

"I want to stop by the florist's before we go home," Uncle Darren said. "I want to get some flowers for Aunt Barb."

"Why?" Brad asked. "It's not her birthday or Mother's Day."

"I want to surprise her because she likes flowers," Uncle Darren smiled. "When you love somebody, you want to show that you love and appreciate that person," Uncle Darren explained. "You want to do what makes the other person happy. It's a lot like serving God. In fact, one of the best-known verses in the Bible is Luke 6:31. It's called the golden rule, and it teaches us to do unto others as we would want them to do unto us."

"Would you please explain?" Brad asked.

"Well, let me see . . ." Uncle Darren said thoughtfully. "Do you say 'thank you' when your mom serves a meal or cleans your room?"

"Usually," answered Brad.

"Do you say 'thank you' when the server brings you food or when you're invited to someone's house?" Brad nodded.

"Saying 'thank you' is showing gratitude," Uncle Darren explained. "You see, God's laws are really about how we are to honor God and love others."

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Sunday

READ Read Exodus 20:1-11 and this week's story, "Citizens of the Love Kingdom."

LEARN Begin to learn the power text, Jeremiah 31:33.

PRAY Praise God that His Word is a clear guide.

Monday

READ Read Exodus 20:12-17 and John 14:15.

THINK How do the first four commandments describe the relationship with God and the last six the relationship with others?

WRITE Rewrite the Ten Commandments as "10 Ways to Love." Use positive affirmations (i.e., Honor God).

REVIEW Review the power text.

PRAY Thank God for His laws that make life happier.

Tuesday

READ Read Matthew 22:34-40.

THINK How do Jesus' two great commandments compare to the ones you rewrote yesterday based on Exodus 20:1-17?

REVIEW Review the power text.

PRAY Ask God to teach you the principles of His kingdom and to "write" them on your heart.

Darren listened intently to Uncle Darren.

"Remember the first commandment in Exodus 20? God said, 'You shall have no other gods before Me.' We need to acknowledge God as the only one who deserves our worship and adoration. Anything else that absorbs most of our time, interest, and affections interferes with our love for God. Think about it: if Christians were respectful of God and behaved like Christ, we would be sure to make time for Him and others. We would enjoy serving Him by serving others. We would love Him most and show that love through our actions toward others.

"Through the second commandment we see God's intention to communicate with us as person to person. To worship an image or an object that represents God or Jesus is a violation of His law.

"The meaning of the third commandment is plain. We should never use God's name lightly, carelessly, or casually in our conversations. Our Creator is a holy God whose name we should always pronounce with utmost reverence and respect.

"The fourth commandment bears the seal of God and the mark of His authority as our Creator. The first word of this commandment calls us to remember the Lord's holy day of rest, the seventh-day Sabbath, and to reserve it for worshipping God and nurturing community. The faithful observance of the Sabbath as God's holy day of rest offers opportunities for spending more time with God in prayer, worship, and Bible study, as well as with others through fellowship and community outreach.

"God intended families to be reflec-

tions of His love to our world," Uncle Darren continued. "The fifth commandment is the only commandment followed by a promise. God honors those who respect and obey their parents, and promises to bless them with long life."

Brad looked down. "Mom says I take too long to obey, and that dishonors her. She says it wastes a lot of time."

"Ahhh." Uncle Darren looked kindly into the eyes of Brad, then added, "To honor our parents means to obey them even when we don't get our way, because they have our best interest at heart.

"'You shall not murder' means treating everyone with utmost respect, because all human beings are created by God in His image. Jesus also condemned the thoughts and feelings of hatred against others. We can overcome hatred by asking Jesus to fill us with His love. He has taught us by example how to love our enemies [see Matthew 5:44, 45].

"The commandment 'You shall not commit adultery' emphasizes the importance of faithfulness between marriage partners, as well as respect and loyalty to our family members.

"'You shall not steal' means you should not take what is not yours. God calls us to respect the property of others, but also to honor Him with the



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Wednesday

READ Read Revelation 14:12.

THINK What do you think this verse is talking about? Have you experienced "patient endurance"?

MAKE Every country has a flag. Design a flag for heaven.

REVIEW Review the power text.

PRAY Ask God to give you the courage to have patient endurance for Him.

Thursday

READ Read John 14:15.

THINK What were your New Year's resolutions? Which resolutions involve your spiritual life? Which ones focus on becoming a better citizen of God's kingdom of love?

TALK Talk to somebody about what it means to remain faithful to Jesus? (See Revelation 14:12.)

REVIEW Review the power text.

PRAY Ask Jesus to help you focus on Him and remain true to Him in all that you do.

Friday

READ Read Jeremiah 31:33.

TALK Discuss with your family God's commandments. What are the commandments that some people ignore?

THINK What are societies and people like without rules? How do rules really make us happier? How do they help us focus on others instead of ourselves?

REVIEW Review the power text.

PRAY Thank God that His law prepares us for citizenship in heaven.

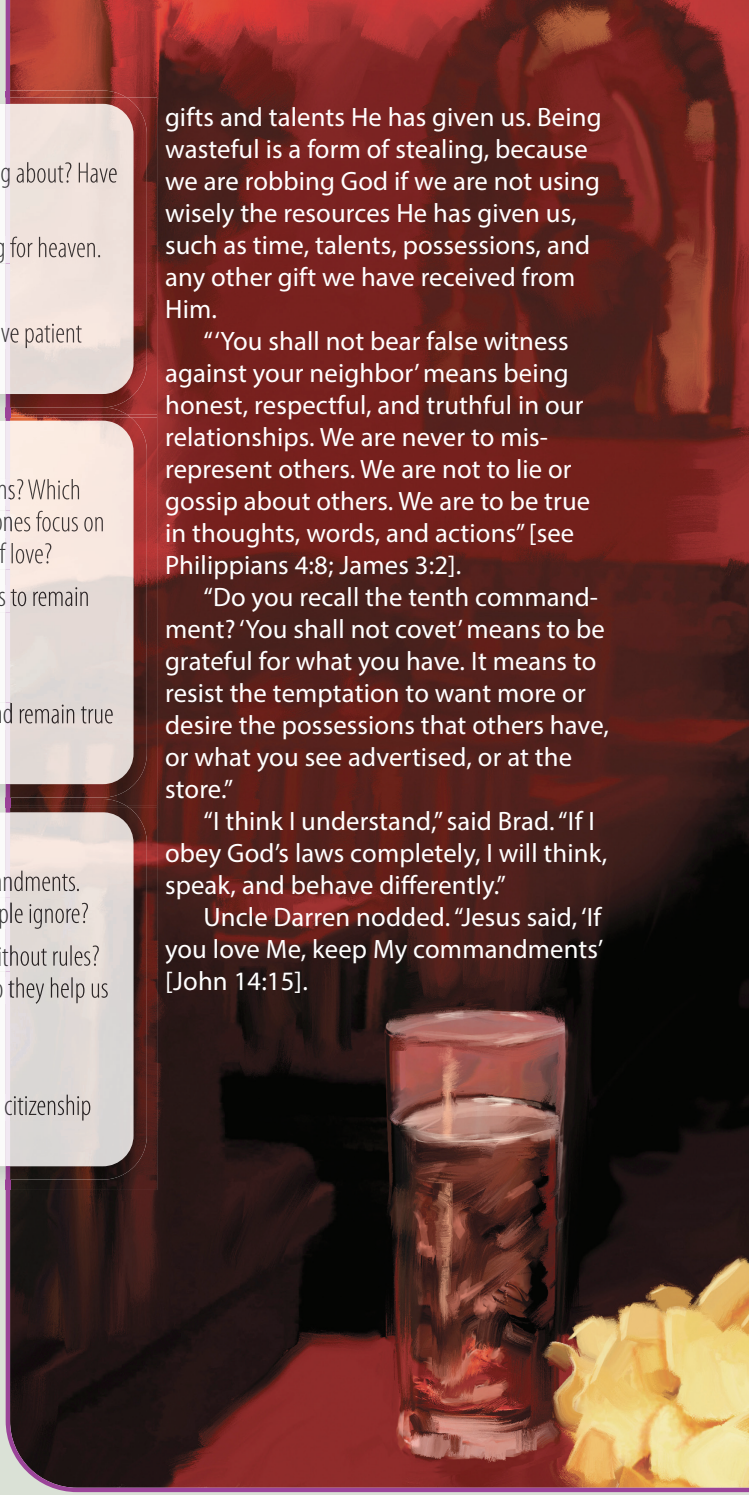
gifts and talents He has given us. Being wasteful is a form of stealing, because we are robbing God if we are not using wisely the resources He has given us, such as time, talents, possessions, and any other gift we have received from Him.

"'You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor' means being honest, respectful, and truthful in our relationships. We are never to misrepresent others. We are not to lie or gossip about others. We are to be true in thoughts, words, and actions" [see Philippians 4:8; James 3:2].

"Do you recall the tenth commandment? 'You shall not covet' means to be grateful for what you have. It means to resist the temptation to want more or desire the possessions that others have, or what you see advertised, or at the store."

"I think I understand," said Brad. "If I obey God's laws completely, I will think, speak, and behave differently."

Uncle Darren nodded. "Jesus said, 'If you love Me, keep My commandments' [John 14:15].




"Jesus kept God's law throughout His earthly life, leaving an example for us. The Holy Spirit will help us keep God's law, the Ten Commandments. As we honor God and bless others we prepare to one day become citizens of God's kingdom."

PUZZLE 8

WE SHALL BE LIKE HIM

Instructions: Can you decipher this message to reveal the Bible verse?

KEY:

+ = a	^ = b	2 = c	(= d	@ = e	% = f	* = g	7 = h
9 = i	3 = k	8 = l	4 = m	& = n	5 = o	$ = p	! = r
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