

Growing Deeper
The LEGO® Conundrum

Week One: *The Conundrum*
Matthew 22:34-40

1. Let's start with a fun thought experiment: what is the absolute worst sin a person could commit? Murder? Rape? Genocide? What reasoning do you have behind your pick for the most evil thing a person can do?
2. Now turn to Exodus 20 and read verses 1-17. What famous list is given in this passage?
3. Scan the commandments you find there. Was the "worst sin" you chose covered by one of the commandments? Which one?
4. Rabbis in Jesus' time used to debate which commandment (they had over 600!) was the most important. Looking only at these ten, which commandment would you say is the most important? Why?
5. Martin Luther considered the first commandment (you shall have no other gods) to be the most important. Did your "worst sin" break the first commandment? Should the sin you listed break the first commandment, or is Martin Luther wrong?
6. By this measure, the sin of "worrying" would be the worst sin you could commit — worse than murder! — because it would show a lack of trust in God. Have you ever worried about your life? Do you feel like your worrying is a worse thing than something like stealing? Why or why not?
7. We'll unpack this more tomorrow, but for now, close your FIFTEEN by asking God to dwell in your heart and remove all of your fear and worry — because you can trust in his care and concern for your life.

Spend FIFTEEN - Day Two

8. As some of us saw yesterday, understanding the commandments can get tricky. As proof, count how many command statements there are in Exodus 20:3-17. How many do you find? (I'll give you a hint: the answer isn't ten!)
9. This has led to disagreement even in our day about how to number the Ten Commandments. But the complexity of God's law has been bothering people for a long time. Read the story in Matthew 22:34-40. What was the primary question being debated?
10. What was Jesus' answer about the most important commandment?

11. Look again at Exodus 20:3-17. Do any of the commandments say anything about us "loving" anybody?
12. In that case, how accurate is Jesus' summary? What point is he making?
13. Is one commandment — "love" — easier or harder to follow than ten commandments (Sabbath, honoring parents, no idolatry, blasphemy, adultery, murder, stealing, lying, or coveting)? Why do you feel that way?
14. End your FIFTEEN by praying for God to help you embrace his radical command of "love" above all other good things in life.

Spend FIFTEEN - Day Three

15. What are some ways you naturally show love to the people in your life?
16. Why do you think these are good and beneficial things to do for them?
17. But now think about God. If God doesn't need any good and beneficial things from us, what does it actually look like to "love" God?
18. God does give us a list of the things we can do to show our love to him. Read Exodus 20:1-11. What does he ask us to do?
19. Why do you think these things matter? What benefit is there to not making idols, not misusing God's name, or remembering the Sabbath? And who actually benefits: us or God? (See verse 6.)
20. Even the commandment to "love God" is ultimately for our own good, not his. What is one way you can focus on right now to start emphasizing a love for God in your own life?
21. Close your FIFTEEN in prayer. Thank God for his love for you, and ask him to help you develop a closeness with him in return. Remind yourself that it is for your own well-being.

Spend FIFTEEN - Day Four

22. Can "love" for another person ever be coerced? In other words, is it possible to "force" someone to love another person in a friendly, parental, or romantic way? Why or why not?

23. Now skim Luke 10:25-37. What is Jesus ultimately telling this expert in the law to do?
24. Is being told "to love everybody as your neighbor" the same thing as forcing us to love someone else? What makes this command difficult to follow?
25. Now look at Exodus 20:12-17. Do these commands for "loving our neighbor" focus on a person's feelings or on a person's actions?
26. Maybe it's impossible to force loving feelings, but actions can certainly be dictated. Which of these commandment "actions" do you struggle to avoid the most?
27. The thing you identified is called an "area for growth." What step could you take this week to grow in this area?
28. Pray and ask God to help you live out his love for all the "neighbors" in your life!

Spend FIFTEEN - Day Five

29. If someone you know is hurting for any reason, what is the most loving thing you could think of to do for them?
30. Jesus wasn't the only person to say "love" is the most important commandment. Check out what Paul says in 1 Corinthians 13. What are the three things that last forever?
31. The love Paul is describing is pretty radical! How easy is it to "keep no record of being wronged" (v.5)?
32. Now I invite you to contemplate a challenging story. Read the opening case study about Tammy and Sara in this Christian magazine article: <https://relevantmagazine.com/god/worldview/unexpected-problem-grace>
33. Was what Tammy did a "loving" act? Why or why not?
34. Do you feel that Tammy's choice to pay for Sara's drugs is acceptable within God's moral law? Why or why not?
35. Close your FIFTEEN by leaning into the tension of Tammy's act. God let himself be killed for the sake of loving us. What painful acts could we be willing to consider for the sake of loving others?