

February Youth Bible Study (The 10 Commandments 1-4) Synopsis

The 2003 February Bible Study was held on Friday, February 21st at the Residence of our Treasurer, Mr. Philip John. The bible study started at 7:15pm. 18 Members were present including Achen and Kochamma. Mrs. Annie J. Mathew and Philip's cousin C.J. were also present. 3 members (Nibi, Nisha, Sheena) from the Rockland CSI church were also present. The total participation was therefore 22 people.

We started with singing for about 20 minutes. Achen then started by having someone read from Mathew 22: 34-40 (the greatest commandment). Achen then led the opening prayer. Ajo introduced the topic and the speakers. The topic was the 10 commandments 1-4. This is the first of 2 consecutive bible studies on this topic. We split up the 10 commandments this way because the first four have to do with God and the last 6 have to do with our fellow humans. The speakers we had assigned were:

1. Leju -- 1st Commandment: You shall not have no other Gods before me
2. Manju -- 2nd Commandment: You shall not make yourself any graven images...
3. Roshni -- 3rd Commandment: You shall not take the name of the Lord in vain
4. Deepthi -- 4th Commandment: Remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy

Leju spoke first. He restated the commandment 'you shall not have any other God's before me.' He spoke about Daniel habitually worshipping his God 3 times a day since his youth. He said that in today's society many people put other "Gods" before them, like money, power, etc.

Manju spoke next. She said graven images constitute of idols and such and she stated the dictionary meaning of the word idol. She quoted Colossians 1:15 which said "He (Jesus) is the image of the invisible God." Our responsibility is to love only our God and to have a personal relationship with Him. Like Leju, she also stated that in today's society's idols have become money, fashion, work, etc.

Roshni was next. She quoted Deuteronomy 5:11 which says that God will not hold anyone guiltless who misuses his name. We misuse God's name whenever we misrepresent God through false teaching, broken promises, cursing, etc. She said that the 3rd commandment was unique because in the first 2 commandments God is speaking in the first person singular (I, Me) and in the third one he is speaking in the 3rd person singular when he says 'You shall not misuse the *name of the Lord your God*. This shows the importance of God's name. The name Jesus is a combination of two words: Yahweh and Salvation. Etymological meaning of Jesus is "Yahweh Saves."

Deepthi went last. Deepthi told of 2 examples in the NT of the Jewish authority questioning Jesus for the work he did on the Sabbath. One was when he healed a sick man and other was when he was walking and picked the heads of grain on the Sabbath. Then she quoted Mark 2:27 which said that the Sabbath was made for man and not man for the Sabbath. She said that God meant the Sabbath to be more of a spiritual day off rather than a physical day off. It's about forgetting the worldly things and concentrating on God.

Achen then opened the floor up to any questions or doubts. Philip pointed out that it says "you shall not have any other God's before me, what about after?" Achen said Jesus is the first and last and that's what it means in this context.

Ajo asked "Do we as Christians, have to observe Saturday as the Sabbath like the Jews?" Achen quoted from 1st Cor. 16:2 and Acts 20:7. Achen said that here Jesus said that the Son of Man is greater than the Sabbath itself. Achen said that we worship on Sunday because the early church worshipped on Sundays in order to remember Christ's resurrection on a Sunday although some christian denominations, namely Seventh Day Adventists have their worship on Saturdays.

Achen pointed out that idols don't have to be physical. Today's idols are money, family, work, kids, power, wealth, etc. They reside inside us and in our minds.

Leena asked whether praying to Mary (like Catholics) or bowing before the cross as she has seen in Bombay is in practice idol worship or not. Achen said that the Catholic church is starting to change some of its ways and many Catholic churches even in India are getting rid of superfluous statues and sculptures.

Achen concluded by pointing out that where the old commandments were very negative, don't do this--don't do that, the new commandment given by Jesus was positive. He is saying DO this: Love your neighbor as yourself, and all the other commandments will be done as well.

Before prayer, Achen wanted to know from the speakers the effectiveness of having our members prepare these 5 minute speeches. Roshni and Leju said that they learned a great deal and the other speakers said they did as well and wanted it to continue. Asha asked for volunteers for the next bible study on commandments 5-10. Here's the tentative list of volunteers (not in any order, we still have to assign the commandments except for Deepthi's):

- * Leena
- * Lenu
- * Deepthi (commandment 7)
- * Justin
- * Sheena or Nibi (Rockland)
- * Mary (via Philip)

We then proceeded to prayer time. Ajo asked for requests and we had everyone pray a few sentences going around the room with Achen saying the concluding prayer and Benediction. The requests for prayer:

- Achen: Pray for our country as we are in the shadow of a war
- Achen: Pray for the Church of South India in its present conflict with the Moderator
- Ajo: Pray for the candy sale which is going to start on Sunday

- Asha: Pray that we can find a suitable bus for the Lancaster Trip
- Lenu: Pray for our upcoming exams
- Asha: Pray for people who are sick and suffering and not in good health

The bible study ended at 9:05pm. Afterwards Ajo had the members fill out a Questionnaire for our Family Retreat 2003 prepared by Mr. Biji P. Ninan to get youth feedback as he plans this year's family retreat. Dinner was provided for everyone by the host family.

To His glory,

Ajo Cherian
Youth Secretary