

THE WORDS OF GOD

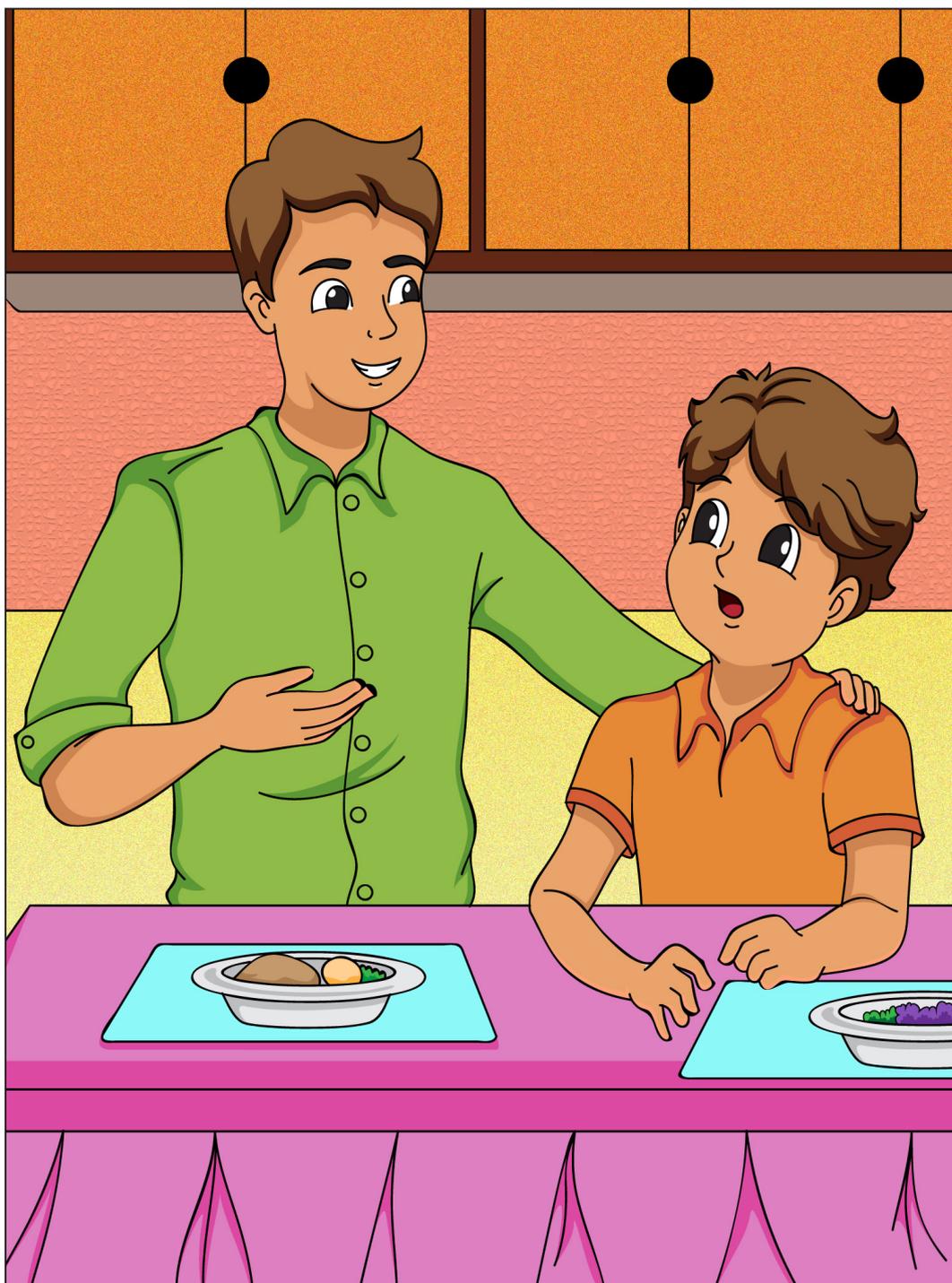
LESSON 8 → Exodus 20:1-26; Ecclesiastes 12:13-14

Gabe asked his father to explain to him the words of God.

Gildeah sat at the edge of the fire lit circle, the evening meal his mother had set before him still untouched. The events of the past hours raced through his mind in a strange confusion. He looked across at his father who sat unmoving, the strain of concentration lining his face. Could his father help him understand what he had just heard?

He rose to his feet, walked over to his father, and knelt down beside him. "Will you tell me, Father?" he asked in a low voice. "Can you explain to me the words of God? What are these Commandments that He has given to us through Moses?"

For a long moment his father remained motionless. In those moments of silence, Gildeah felt once more the awe and fear which had gripped him when the thunder had resounded across the wilderness where they had





WE LOVE TO OBEY GOD!

Great peace have they which love thy law. — Psalm 119:165

been encamped. In the gleam of the firelight he could almost see again the lightning which had slashed through the sky. It had seemed to come from the mountain where Moses and Aaron had gone up to hear the words of the Lord. At last his father spoke: "Moses has given to our people the Commandments of God. We were afraid when we saw the lightning, and heard the thundering and the noise of the trumpet, and saw the mountain smoking. We moved as far back from the mountain as we could while Moses continued to speak with God. Through him we know God's will for our people. We know the things we must do. We know the things we must not do. And we have God's promise that He will come to us and bless us if we keep His words."

Several thousand years later:

"I just didn't know what to tell him, Dad," Gabe said slowly to his father. "When Jayden asked me why I wouldn't cheat on the test like everyone else, I told him we're supposed to obey God's Word. He asked what I meant, and I told him the Bible says we aren't supposed to steal, and I figured cheating is stealing someone else's answers . . ." His voice trailed off and he looked down at the untouched dinner on his plate.

"I'm not sure what the problem is, Son." His dad looked up from his own plate, a bit puzzled. "That sounds like a good explanation to me. Did he say more?"

"Well, he asked why I thought it was so important to follow a bunch of rules that were written thousands of years ago. He knew that not stealing was one of the Ten Commandments. But he said the laws God gave Moses were for that time, so we don't have to obey them. That's the part I didn't know how to answer."

His dad smiled slightly. "Well, Jayden was right about one thing. The Ten Commandments were a part of the Law God gave Moses for the Israelites. But as for our not having to obey them . . . well,

the same guidelines for our actions and behavior were given again in the New Testament."

"All of them?" Gabe asked.

"All except the fourth Commandment. After Christ rose from the dead on the first day of the week, the early Christians made that their day of worship rather than the seventh day."

Gabe looked thoughtful. "But Dad, I don't remember ever reading a list of commandments in the New Testament. Where is it?"

"It wasn't given all at once like the Law was given to Moses for the Israelites. But each of the Commandments is restated in the teachings of Jesus or His disciples. In fact, in Matthew 5:17 Jesus said, 'Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil.' You see, Gabe, when Jesus died on Calvary He was our perfect Sacrifice. There was no more need for people to keep the law regarding sacrificing animals to pay for their sins. But the laws which told how to live in harmony with God were still in effect. And we still must follow God's instructions if we want to be at peace with Him."

Gabe looked seriously at his dad. "Instructions like . . . not stealing. Right, Dad?"

His father nodded. "That's right, Son."

Gabe thought about this for a moment, then picked up his fork. "Well, I'd better get some dinner into me! I feel a lot better now. I think I can explain it to Jayden if he asks me again."

**TRUTH
IN ACTION**

The bookworm is reading the Ten Commandments from the Bible. Can you help him learn them? In Exodus 20 you can find the verses shown on the tree. Write them on the correct leaves. Then circle the four commandments that tell how we should act before God. The other six commandments tell how we should act toward people.

