



Serving the Truth in a Love Sandwich

Discipleship

Following Jesus

1st Peter 3:15 "But sanctify Christ as Lord in your hearts, always being ready to make a defense to everyone who asks you to give an account for the hope that is in you, yet with gentleness and reverence."

This series of courses is about answering difficult questions about Christianity. As disciples of Jesus Christ we have a responsibility to be prepared to defend our faith. We are *not* going to study what Moslems, Hindus, Buddhists etc. believe. We are going to study the truth, not lies, except for a few of their questions, which often have lies as their basis. I hope as we go through these lessons you will create your own personal statement of faith, so you will have a clear idea of what you are defending.

However, as we study, remember God's truth is spread more heart to heart than mind to mind. Since we have minds, they must also be included in the communication, but never forget to serve the truth in a love sandwich.

In this course we hope to show that the best and most proper way for us to express our gratitude for God's salvation is to worship Him and obey His command to love one another.

Lesson 1 – Those Who Truly Love God Obey Him

Lesson 2 – Obeying God's Commands Leads to Blessings

Lesson 3 – The Cost of Discipleship

Lesson 4 – What Does God Expect Us to Do?

Lesson 5 – The New and Old Covenant

Suggested methodology for each lesson:

1. Fellowship (Save most of this for the end of class.)
2. Take prayer requests (Try to keep it from becoming a competition to see who has the most or the worst.)
3. Pray (The idea here is to leave our troubles with God so we can give His word our attention with a clear mind.)
4. Read the lesson's text aloud from the Bible. (... or a few verses at a time as you answer the questions.)
5. Answer and *briefly* discuss the "fill in the blank" questions. (Let those who prefer to listen, listen. My answers on the next page are just one opinion; you may have a better answer if it is based on Scripture.)
6. On the final "Think & Pray" question everyone should take a few minutes to pray over it and jot down their own thoughts before the discussion. **This will give the Holy Spirit a time to speak.**
7. Discuss your "Think & Pray" answers. (Never force anyone to share theirs. As with the other questions, my answer is just one more opinion; you may have a better answer.)
8. Close in prayer (It is best to call on others to pray, but try to get their permission ahead of time.)
9. Fellowship (Leave this as open ended as possible for the time and place you meet.)

Depending on the number of people, each lesson is expected to take about one hour. Steps 4 thru 7 are about half of that. If you take longer, let each lesson take more than one meeting, or consider breaking into two groups. The final "Think & Pray" question should always be covered, because that is when everyone takes a quiet moment to listen to the Teacher, the Holy Spirit. If you take less time, extra questions are provided for discussion called "For Further Thought"

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Other free Bible courses are available at <http://www.LoveBibleStudy.com>

Additional Reading

These lessons are designed for small groups or individuals to use without reference to other materials besides the Bible. However, a lot more could be gained if those involved would do some additional reading between class meetings. (See <http://lovebiblestudy.com/CC/Library.htm>)

We plan to provide specific recommendations with each course at <http://lovebiblestudy.com/TLS/Adjunct/> We also hope to be making specific chapter recommendations from various Christian books that have helped us in our understanding of apologetics, but are not entirely about the topic of the course. Such as these books which would make good companions for this entire series of courses.

Mere Christianity by C. S. Lewis

I Don't Have Enough Faith to Be an Atheist by Norman L. Geisler and Frank Turek

The Case for ... series of books by Lee Strobel

Cold Case Christianity, *God's Crime Scene*, and *Forensic Faith* – 3 books by J. Warner Wallace

Lesson 1 – Those Who Truly Love God Obey Him

Read these scriptures and answer the associated question:

(1A) Read what Jesus says in John 14:15. What will we do if we love him? _____

(1B) Hebrews 11:1-40 True or False? Faith is shown in actions that are pleasing to God. _____

1st John 5:2-3 for the next two questions.

(1C) How do we show our love for God _____

(1D) Are God's commandments a great burden or grievous? _____

(1E) 2nd John 1:6 What is loving God? _____

(1F) John 14:21 Those who love the Lord do what? _____

(1G) Hebrews 5:8-11 What does this passage tell us about Jesus?

Think & Pray _____

For further thought:

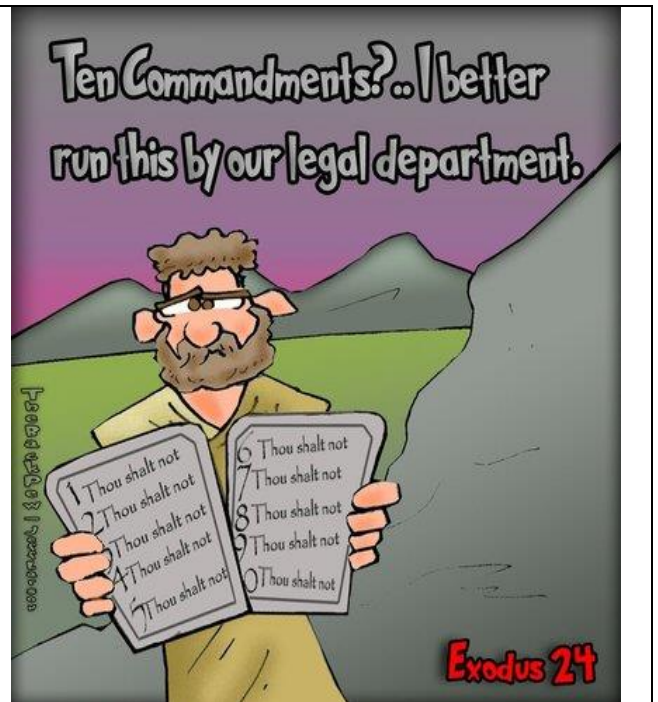
[1h] *Atheist Attack* Jesus lies. Luke 12:33 Jesus said: Sell what you have and give alms. Did Jesus lie or have you sold what you have? Did you then give all your money away? Do you prove to be a good Christian in Jesus' eyes? How would you respond to this attack? (Hint: Luke 12:25-36, the context of the verse the atheist quotes.)

[1i] Can you think of a time when it was awkward to obey God, but it turned out to be a blessing when you did? What happened?

[1j] What was the most difficult thing in your life to give up for the sake of God?

[1k] What does God expect us to do?

[1l] There are hundreds of commands in the Bible. Are some more important than others? Are there any we can ignore? What do we do if some of them seem to contradict one another?



----- SOME POSSIBLE ANSWERS -----

(Your answers do not have to match exactly.)

Lesson 1 – Those Who Truly Love God Obey Him

- (1A) Read what Jesus says in John 14:15. What will we do if we love him? Keep or obey His commandments. Do you love Jesus Christ? What is your evidence?
- (1B) Hebrews 11:1-40 True or False? Faith is shown in actions that are pleasing to God. True What have you done lately to demonstrate your faith?
- (1C) How do we show our love for God? By keeping or obeying his commandments. Can you give examples of having done this?
- (1D) Are God's commandments a great burden or grievous? No. Really? Is that how you actually feel? Most of us don't feel this truth unless we compare obedience to God to being a slave of sin.
- (1E) 2nd John 1:6 What is loving God? Walking in obedience, in accord with, or after his commandments.
- (1F) John 14:21 Those who love the Lord do what? They keep or obey his commandments.
- (1G) Hebrews 5:8-11 **Jesus, Our Example:** Jesus asked God to not have to suffer on the cross, but He submitted Himself to the Father's will. Because He did, we have salvation. If Christ's obedience gave us salvation, what will our own obedience give us?

My further thoughts:

[1h] My response: In context, Jesus did not tell them to sell everything they had. If He had meant that, He would not have immediately told them to have clothing and lamps in readiness and they certainly would not have had a door to open.

How could I have been more loving?

[1i] This will be the topic of the next lesson: Obeying God's Commands Leads to Blessings

[1j] This will be the topic of Lesson 3: The Cost of Discipleship

[1k] This will be the topic of Lesson 4: What Does God Expect Us to Do?

[1l] This will be the topic of Lesson 5: The New and Old Covenant



Lesson 2 – Obeying God’s Commands Leads to Blessings

Read these scriptures and answer the associated question:

(2A) John 14:23 What happens to those who obey the Lord?

(2B) Leviticus 25:18-19 What happens to those who obey the Lord?

(2C) Matthew 5:19 What happens to those who practice and teach what the Lord said?

(2D) Matthew 7:24-27 What happens to those who obey the Lord?

(2E) Hebrews 6:10-12 Will God forget or overlook the love we have shown Him _____

(2F) 1st John 3:21-24 Does the answer to our prayers have anything to do with obeying God? _____

(2G) 1st Corinthians 3:10-15. What do you think this passage is talking about?

Think & Pray _____

For further thought:

[2h] *Atheist Attack:* Mark 16:17-18 "These signs will accompany those who have believed: in My name they will cast out demons, they will speak with new tongues; 18 they will pick up serpents, and if they drink any deadly poison, it will not hurt them; they will lay hands on the sick, and they will recover."

Premise: Believers can drink poison without suffering harm. (see above)

Premise: You are a believer.

Conclusion: You can drink poison without suffering harm.

Care to try it?

How would you respond to this attack?

(Hints: 1 Cor 6:12, Matt 4:7; Deut 6:16)

[2i] John 14:23 What does it mean when it says, "We will come to him and make Our abode with him"?

[2j] Matthew 7:24 Are you acting on the Words of Jesus? Examples?

[2k] 1 John 3:23 Are you obeying these two commands?



----- SOME POSSIBLE ANSWERS -----

(Your answers do not have to match exactly.)

Lesson 2 – Obeying God’s Commands Leads to Blessings

- (2A) John 14:23 What happens to those who obey the Lord? God will love them and Jesus and God will live or abide with them. Do you have evidence this is happening to you?
- (2B) Leviticus 25:18-19 What happens to those who obey the Lord? They will see results from their labor, have enough to eat, and live in safety. Can you give examples of this happening to you?
- (2C) Matthew 5:19 What happens to those who practice and teach what the Lord said? They will be called great in the kingdom of heaven. Does this mean now or in the hereafter? Why?
- (2D) Matthew 7:24-27 What happens to those who obey the Lord? Their works will survive catastrophe. Have you seen this in your life or in the lives of fellow Christians?
- (2E) Hebrews 6:10-12 Will God forget or overlook the love we have shown Him? No. I find this very comforting. How about you?
- (2F) 1st John 3:21-24 Does the answer to our prayers have anything to do with obeying God? Yes But what exactly is the relationship? Can we make deals with God?
- (2G) 1st Corinthians 3:10-15 **Jesus, Our Foundation:** Jesus is the foundation of our eternal life. With Him it is assured and it has nothing to do with our works. However, there also seems to be something about the quality of our future in heaven that depends on what we do here. I do not think that means anyone will be unhappy or envious there, but it does appear we will not all be in exactly the same circumstances.

My further thoughts:

[2h] My Answer: Perhaps this Mark 16 passage we find a prophecy of Paul's surviving a viper bite on his trip to Rome and of tongues at Pentecost. (Compare "...they will pick up serpents..." with the story of Paul surviving a snake bite in Acts 28:1-6. Compare "... they will speak with new tongues ..." with the story of Pentecost in Acts 2:4-12.) I'm not sure what the poison drinking is about but I assume it might be something similar here, that has not been reported to us. Whether it is or is not, as Christians we are called to walk in wisdom not foolishness, so, no I'll pass on the poison. As for your silly syllogism, your argument implies "all believers" in the first premise. The word "all" is not there or suggested by the underlying scripture from which you think it came. It is only necessary for Mark's statement to be true of some disciples, not all, in order to be true. Your argument fails.

Atheist Retort: While Jesus did mention tongues, relating this to Paul's incident with the viper is to overstretch the text. It could have had to do with any other incident or to none at all. Second, the word "all" is not necessary in the text. In formal logic the absence of quantity modifiers to a plural noun implies that the collective as a whole is meant.

My answer: Perhaps an unquantified plural noun in a formal syllogism does imply "all," but the syllogism is yours, not Mark's. Your opinion of the connection to the later events might be correct. I do not think so, but my evidence is thin. Either way it has nothing to do with the point at hand. My understanding of the Greek text is that "all" is not required. "Some" works as well. And since that is obviously the sensible understanding, that is the correct one. But I have only been studying Greek for four years, so I cannot claim extensive expertise. What makes you think "all" is the only correct understanding of the Greek? They had a word for "all." Why didn't the writer use it, if he meant it?

How could I have been more loving in my answer?

[2i] I think it means the Holy Spirit will live in us.

Lesson 3 – The Cost of Discipleship

Read these scriptures and answer the associated question:

(3A) Romans 12:2 What are we not to be conformed to? _____

(3B) Matthew 6:33 What will be ours if we seek His Kingdom and His righteousness? _____

(3C) 2 Timothy 3:12 What will happen to those who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus? _____

(3D) Phil 3:20 Where is our citizenship? _____

(3E) 1 Peter 1:6-9 How are we to react to various trials? _____

(3F) Philippians 1:29 What two gifts are mentioned here? _____

(3G) 2 Cor 4:15-17 What is for our sakes? _____

(3H) Ephesians 6:11-12 Who is our main enemy? _____

(3I) 2 Tim 4:17-18 Who will bring us safely to His kingdom? _____

(3J) Rev 3:19 What happens to those He loves? _____

(3K) Matt 10:28 What is your cost benefit analysis of being a disciple of Jesus Christ?

Think & Pray _____

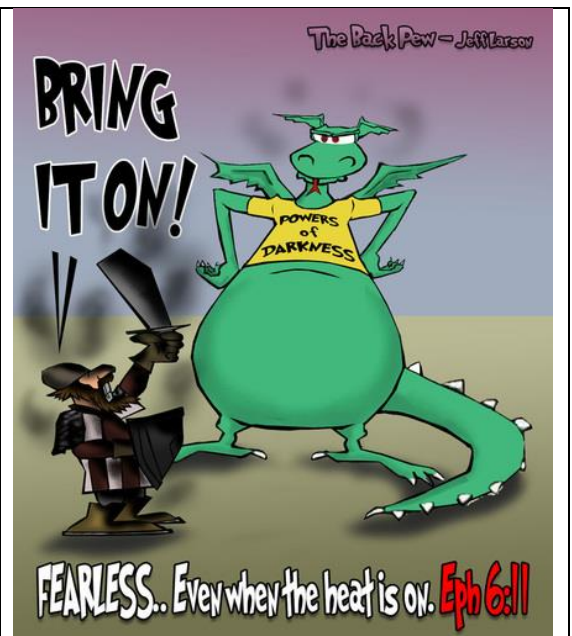
For further thought:

[3l] *Atheist Attack* Jesus lies and promotes hate. Jesus contradicted himself. He said "honor thy father and mother" in Matt. 15:4, but in Luke 14:26 he said "If any man comes to me and does not hate his father and mother ... he cannot be my disciple". Did Jesus lie about your having to hate your mother, your father, your brothers, your sisters, your wife, your children and your own life before Jesus would accept you? Would an evil person require that? Yes. How would you respond to this attack? (Hints: John 16:25, Gal 4:24)

[3m] 1 Peter 1:6-9, 2 Cor 1:8-10; James 1:2-4; Rom 5:3-5
- How do you react to various trials?

[3n] Ephesians 6:11-12 - Have you ever felt like you were being attacked by the devil? What happened?

[3o] Heb 12:5-6 - How has the Lord disciplined you in your life? What did you learn from Him?



----- SOME POSSIBLE ANSWERS -----

(Your answers do not have to match exactly.)

Lesson 3 – The Cost of Discipleship

- (3A) Romans 12:2 What are we not to be conformed to? This world (See also Matt 10:34-37; James 4:4; James 4:13-15; Joshua 24:15) The pleasures of this world are not for us. Do you mind?
- (3B) Matthew 6:33 What will be ours if we seek His Kingdom and His righteousness? All these things What does “all these things” include?
- (3C) 2 Timothy 3:12 What will happen to those who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus? Persecution. (See also Acts 14:22; John 15:18-21; John 17:14-16; 2 Tim 3:12, John 15:19)
- (3D) Phil 3:20 Where is our citizenship? Heaven. So how much does it matter how we are received here?
- (3E) 1 Peter 1:6-9 How are we to react to various trials? Greatly rejoice Why? (See also 2 Cor 1:8-10; James 1:2-4; Rom 5:3-5)
- (3F) Philippians 1:29 What two gifts are mentioned here? Belief in him and suffering for His sake. (See also 2 Cor 4:8-12; 1 Peter 2:21; Acts 9:15; 1 Peter 4:12-15)
- (3G) 2 Cor 4:15-17 What is for our sakes? All things What does “all things” mean?
- (3H) Ephesians 6:11-12 Who is our main enemy? The devil. (See also 1 Peter 5:8; Rev 2:10; Luke 22:31) Does this frighten you at all? Why or why not?
- (3I) 2 Tim 4:17-18 Who will bring us safely to His kingdom? The Lord
- (3J) Rev 3:19 What happens to those He loves? He reproveth and disciplines them. (See also Num 32:23; Prov 29:1 ; Heb 10:31; 2 Tim 2:19; Heb 12:5-6) Does God love you? How do you know?
- (3K) Matt 10:28 The cost of discipleship is high. It costs us everything. The cost of not being His disciple is even higher. (See also John 3:36) More details on this important topic can be found at <http://www.lovebiblestudy.com/TLS/Resources/discipleship.htm>

My further thoughts:

[3i] My Answer: It is a figure of speech called hyperbole. We are to honor our parents. But we are to honor God so much more that the honor we have for our parents seems like hate in comparison.

Atheist Retort: Jesus said nothing like that. He clearly said love in one occasion, and clearly said hate in another. He added no modifiers or explanations. You are adding to the text so the contradiction can be ignored.

My answer: You accuse me of projecting my desires on the text, when you are the one who is doing that. You want to make a liar out of Him, so you twist His words. I want to understand Him, so I treat what He says the same way I would what anyone would say. I try to find a construction that makes sense. I assume that the author or speaker is trying to say something that makes sense. I find the way to construe it that does make sense, and ignore the many ways it can be construed, that do not make sense. You do not like Him, so you look for ways that it does not make sense, and then accuse Him of not making sense. As long as there is a way to construe it that does make sense, such an attack is invalid and mean spirited.

How could I have wrapped this truth in love?

Lesson 4 – What Does God Expect Us to Do?

Read these scriptures and answer the associated question:

(4A) Hebrews 5:12-14 God expects us to train ourselves by practice to tell the difference between what and what?

(4B) 1 Corinthians 3:1-3 Does God expect His children to act differently than other people? _____

(4C) Ephesians 4:11-16 Is it fair to say God expects us to grow in unity and maturity? _____

(4D) Romans 12:1-2 Are we supposed to be like, or conformed to, this world or age? _____

(4E) 2 Tim 2:15 We are to be diligent or study to make sure we accurately understand or "rightly divide" what?

(4F) John 6:26-29 What do you think this passage means and why?

Think & Pray _____

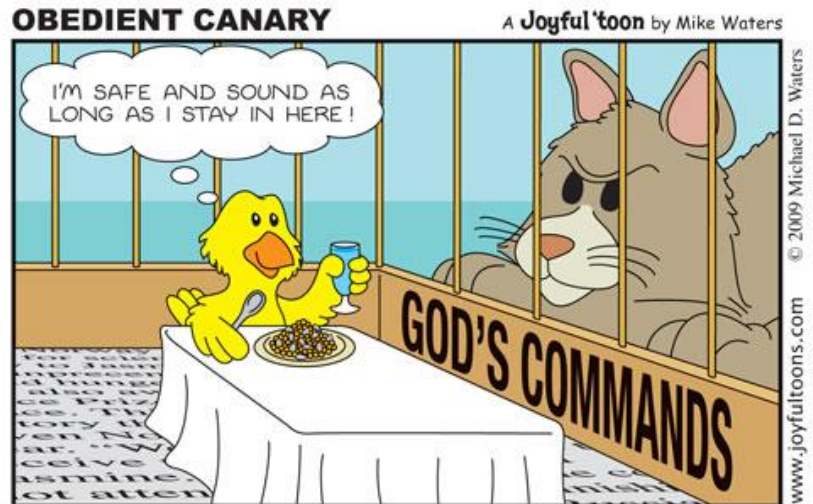
For further thought:

[4g] *Atheist Attack* The Bible is Nonsense. Mark 8:34 says "whosoever will come after me, let him deny himself, take up his cross and follow me." Since Jesus had not yet died on the cross this is senseless. How would you respond to this attack? (Hint: Luke 23:32, Acts 25:16)

[4h] Hebrews 5:12-14 How do you decide what is good and what is evil? What do you do when it turns out you made the wrong decision?

[4i] 1 Corinthians 3:1-3, Romans 12:1-2 Have you ever found yourself having to act in a way others found strange because you were a Christian? If so, what happened? If not, is it because you spend all your time with other Christians, or because you always cave to peer pressure, or what?

[4j] 2 Tim 2:15 What methods do you use to interpret Scripture correctly?



Follow my decrees and be careful to obey my laws, and you will live safely in the land. Then the land will yield its fruit, and you will eat your fill and live there in safety. — LEVITICUS 25:18-19 NIV

----- SOME POSSIBLE ANSWERS -----

(Your answers do not have to match exactly.)

Lesson 4 – What Does God Expect Us to Do?

- (4A) Hebrews 5:12-14 God expects us to train ourselves by practice to tell the difference between good and evil. What are some examples of you doing this when it was difficult to tell for sure.
- (4B) 1 Corinthians 3:1-3 Does God expect His children to act differently than other people? Yes. Do you? In what ways?
- (4C) Ephesians 4:11-16 Is it fair to say God expects us to grow in unity and maturity? Yes. Are you doing this? How do you know?
- (4D) Romans 12:1-2 Are we supposed to be like or conformed to this world or age? No. In what ways are you different from your culture?
- (4E) 2 Tim 2:15 We are to be diligent or study to make sure we accurately understand or "rightly divide" what? God's word of truth. How good are you at this? What makes you say that?
- (4F) John 6:26-29 **Jesus, More than Our Needs:** Do we seek Jesus, as those did, just so our needs will be met? As Christians and children of the King, I think better is expected of us.

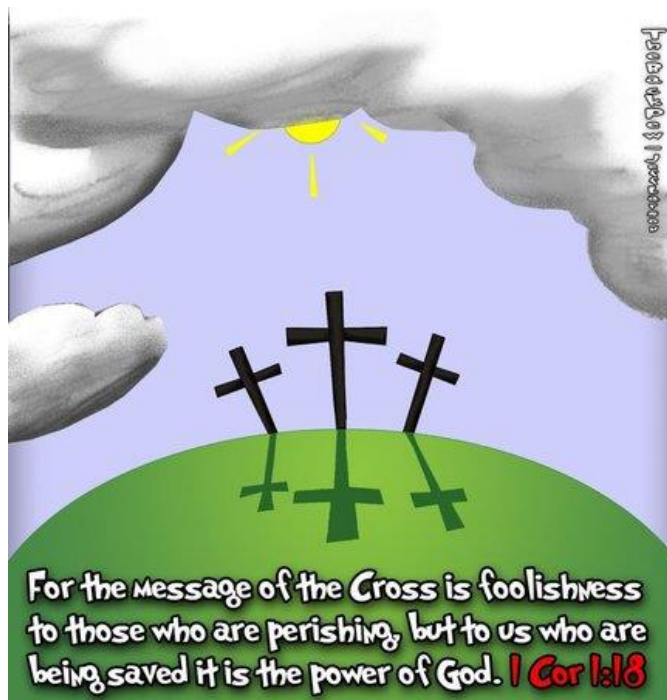
My further thoughts:

[4g] My Answer: I was unaware that you were so familiar with the language, customs, and idiom of the day that you can categorically say that "this is senseless." Just because you don't understand it, doesn't mean no one does. The cross was as familiar to them as the electric chair or noose is to you and I.

Atheist Retort: Yes, the cross was as familiar to them as the wheel, the sword and the brick wall. Among all the well-know items of the time, why would Jesus choose the cross in particular for his metaphor? Before Jesus became an iconic figure, what was "take up his cross" supposed to mean?

My answer: It meant you were on the way to your execution. It meant your life was over. It meant to lose everything.

How could I have been more loving?



Lesson 5 – The New and Old Covenant

Read these scriptures and answer the associated question:

Matthew 22:36-40 for A & B. What are the two greatest commandments?

(5A) _____

(5B) _____

(5C) Gen 17:10 God commands that every male should be what? _____

(5D) Col 2:10-12 What was made without hands? _____

(5E) Lev 17:11 What is the animal's blood for? _____

(5F) Matt 26:28 What is Christ's blood for? _____

(5G) Deut 14:22 What percentage was to be given? _____

(5H) Luke 21:1-4 What percentage did the widow who Jesus admired give? _____

(5I) Lev 11:46-47 What was to not be eaten? _____

(5J) 1 Tim 4:4 Are there any animals we are not supposed to eat? _____

(5K) So which commands are we supposed to obey? *Think & Pray* _____

For further thought:

[5I] *Skeptic's Attack:* Leviticus 17:12 Says, "No person among you may eat blood" But Jesus says in John 6:54 "He who ... drinks My blood has eternal life." So which one is right? Moses or Jesus?

<p>[5m] Matthew 22:40 "On these two commandments depend the whole Law and the Prophets." What does this mean?</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>[5n] If an unbeliever asked you to explain the difference between the Old & New Covenants, what would you tell them?</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>[5o] What did you learn in this course that you hope you will remember?</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p>
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----- SOME POSSIBLE ANSWERS -----
(Your answers do not have to match exactly.)

Lesson 5 – The New and Old Covenant

Matthew 22:36-40 for A & B. What are the two greatest commandments?

(5A) Love the Lord your God with everything within you.

(5B) Love your neighbor as yourself.

(5C) Gen 17:10 God commands that every male should be what? Circumcised

(5D) Col 2:10-12 What was made without hands? Circumcision

(5E) Lev 17:11 What is the animal's blood for? To make atonement

(5F) Matt 26:28 What is Christ's blood for? Forgiveness of sins

(5G) Deut 14:22 What percentage was to be given? 10% (tithe=10%)

(5H) Luke 21:1-4 What percentage did the widow who Jesus admired give? 100%

(5I) Lev 11:46-47 What was to not be eaten? Unclean animals

(5J) 1 Tim 4:4 Are there any animals we are not supposed to eat? No, they are all created by God

(5K) So which commands are we supposed to obey? The simple answer of, "All of them," can not be true.

Almost everyone would agree that the command to build an ark was for Noah and not for us. Likewise most will agree that the command that we love one another is meant for all of us. However, there are many other commands, such as we just studied in this lesson, on which there is not such wide agreement. Are we not supposed to eat pork? If they rebuild the temple are we supposed to sacrifice animals and worship in the temple? Are we supposed to celebrate the Passover? What about musical instruments? Are some or all not acceptable in worship? How old should someone be when they are baptized? Do you baptize by immersion in water or by sprinkling or pouring water on someone? How do you know which commands fall into the category with building the ark which were only meant for someone back then, and which commands fall into the category of loving each other which is meant for us all? How are we to answer these questions from an unbeliever when Christians do not agree on all the answers?

To answer these questions we begin to get into the areas of Christian belief where opinions vary widely between different denominations, between congregations in the same denomination, and even between people in the same church. Most of what we have studied to this point is agreed on by a huge majority of Christians, although you can find alternate ideas about almost anything.

On this topic Paul said in Romans 14:5 "One person regards one day above another, another regards every day alike. Each person must be fully convinced in his own mind." Whatever you decide, it is very important that you make up your own mind and then abide by it. You need to know what you believe and why you believe it, or you will be lukewarm and not pleasing to God, and appear to be a hypocrite to unbelievers. In the Bible God commands that animals be sacrificed for sins, that Passover and several other religious feasts be observed, and that people who worship idols should be stoned. Why don't you do these things? What strategy or approach can we use for deciding what applies directly and literally to us out of the Bible and what is just meant for an example or for people back then? Can you give some examples? You must answer these questions for yourself. My answer if you are curious can be found at <http://www.lovebiblestudy.com/TLS/Resources/covenants.htm>

My further thoughts:

[5I] My Answer: Leviticus is talking about the actual blood of animals. Jesus is talking symbolism. He is setting the stage for understanding the sacrament of Holy Communion, the Lord's Supper.

[5m] It means that all the commandments in the Bible can be sorted into two categories, loving God and loving others. Take the Ten Commandments for instance. The first ones are about loving God, and then starting with "Honor your father and mother" they are about loving others. If we obey the two greatest commandments, we will never disobey any of the others. That makes things a little simpler, I think.