

PVC SMALL GROUPS

START AGAIN

WEEK ONE: SPIRITUALLY

CONNECT

This week we launch a new, very practical series taking a look at the things that impact us the most in life. We all know that we can't start over, to go and make changes in our past, but we do have the ability to **start again**. This first week we'll look at our how we can start again **spiritually**.

- What is one holiday food that you would gladly start again and have more of? What makes it such a favorite of yours?
- Briefly share something good about your past couple of weeks, then briefly share something you wish you could start again.
- What is a Christmas or New Year's Eve experience that you can briefly share to help us know something new about you?
- Before we can start again, we must first have a start. When did you first have a start spiritually, and what do you remember about it?

DISCOVER

Over and over the religious leaders tested Jesus, trying to trip Him up so that if He made a mistake they could prove He wasn't the Messiah. The Sadducees didn't believe in life after death, and the Pharisees were focused on the Law of Moses. The questions each group asked Jesus centered on what their group was passionate about. In this passage, the Pharisees try to trap Jesus into choosing the most important command from the 613 commands given in the Law. The Law of Moses was also recognized and called the Ten Commandments or Commands, The Law, the Covenant, the 613 Laws, or other similar terms representing any singular law, group of laws, or the totality of laws given to Israel by God.

God not only gave Moses the "Ten Commandments", but all of the laws that the nation of Israel were to follow as God's people. They are found primarily in the first five books of the Bible. The Israelites studied the Law from an early age and would have known it well, though not everyone would have understood all of it. The religious leaders were supposed to help the people understand the Law, but made it more confusing and more difficult by adding more and more laws of their own to supposedly make God's laws easier to follow (This was one of Jesus' frustrations with the Jewish leaders).



Moses, along with all of the other Bible writers were Prophets who spoke as guided by God. Some wrote of the past, while others wrote of the present, or even future events. The Old Testament Prophets wrote about the nation of Israel and whether or not it was keeping or not keeping their agreements (covenants) with God, and what the consequences would be. They were usually trying to get God's people back on track following Him.

In the New Testament, the Apostles serve in the role of Prophet and they wrote about how we can live and honor God in our daily lives. The word "Testament" literally means "Covenant" or "Agreement" so the Old Testament is focused on the agreement between God and the nation of Israel through the Law of Moses. The New Testament is focused on the agreement between God and us through Jesus that we enter, not by keeping a lot of laws, but by accepting the free gift Jesus offers us.

Jesus had already silenced the Sadducees, now look at how He responds to the question from the Pharisees.

Read Matthew 22:34-40 and answer a few questions together.

- Of the many commands in the Old Testament, why would it be necessary for Jesus to know which is most important? What benefit would it be for us to know it too (Though we don't need to know all the commands)?
- Of the many commands, why might "loving God" be first and most important? What are some ways we can show our love for God?
- Why would Jesus consider "Loving others" to be just as important as "Loving God"?
- What are some ways that all of the other laws (The 613 laws that the Jewish nation would have known and tried to follow) and all that the Prophets said (All of the books of the Bible are written by Prophets directed by God) be based on these two commands?
- If all the Law of Moses and what the Prophets said (All of the Bible) are based on these two laws, how should that impact the way we read and understand the Bible?

GROW

- How are "Loving God" and "Loving Others" alike to you? How are they different?
- What are some ways, or reasons, in which you struggle to love God?
- What are some ways you can start over in your relationship with God? What next step can we encourage you in taking over the next several weeks?
- What are some ways you can start over in loving others? Is there someone specific we can prayerfully encourage you in taking a next step over the next week or two?

