

## Lesson 1: GOD

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As you read through the Bible, you'll notice that there are a ton of rules or commandments in there. In fact, people have gone through all of the rules in just the first part of the Bible – the Old Testament, and counted 613!

Some of these commandments seem really weird to us. Like this one, “don't eat bats” (Leviticus 11:19). You might be thinking, “That thought never crossed my mind! Bats are scary”. Or this one, “if you build a house, make sure you build a little wall on the roof so people don't fall off and die” (Deuteronomy 22:8).

Now, you may be asking the question that some people in Jesus' day asked; that is, “There are a lot of different commandments, but what's the most important one!?”.

I'm glad you asked.

Someone actually asked Jesus this very question and here's what he said, “You must love the LORD your God with all your heart, all your soul, and all your mind. This is the first and greatest commandment. A second is equally important: ‘Love your neighbor as yourself’” (Matthew 22:37-39).

According to Jesus told us that there are two commandments that are most important: love God with everything you have and love others as yourself.

### **Big Idea: God wants you to have great relationships.**

That's what this whole series is about. How do we have great relationships with God and with others?

Now, every relationship has five parts. And, by every I mean every – your relationship with God, your parents, your siblings, your best friend, that awkward kid that sits behind you in math class, your gym teacher – everyone.

In this lesson, we will just look at how we can have a great relationship with God. So, we will look at how to begin a relationship with God and keep growing in your relationship with God in all five parts.

What are those five parts? **KNOW, TRUST, RELY, COMMIT, and TOUCH.**

*\*\*\*Take time to provide a brief explanation of the 5 parts of the RAM using the 2'x3' trifold RAM chart*

This is a picture of what happens in all your relationships (point to the RAM chart). Every relationship has these five parts.

Think about your best friend.

The first part of any relationship is you have to **KNOW** the person – these are the facts that you know about them. How old are they? What color is their hair? What's their favorite show or movie? How do they act when they get upset?

You know these facts by using your head – by thinking.

You get to know someone through spending time with them, talking and doing things together.

You probably spend a lot of time with your best friend and talk with them a lot, which means you know them really well. (*\*Move the level of know fairly high on the RAM chart.*)

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**TRUST** is the next part of a relationship. Trust is your feeling of confidence in someone. When you trust someone, you feel safe, like they will take care of you and what is important to you.

Back to your best friend – just because you know them does not mean you trust them.

Let's say you *know* that your friend is super clumsy and has broken the screen on three phones in the past six months. But you left your iPad at their house by accident. You had to call them and ask your friend to bring it to school the next day to give to you. Plot out where your **KNOW** level is (should be high because you this is your best friend), **YOUR TRUST** (which should be really low because your friend is so clumsy), and your **RELY** (which should also be really high because you are totally depending on your friend to bring your iPad back to you safely).

*Use the RAM chart, and move the level of trust much lower than know, and the RELY to the top.*

You know your friend really well because you're with them all the time, but your trust or confidence in them is low because of what you've seen. This causes you to guess what will happen if they borrow your iPad.

When you rely on someone, you want them to do what you need - what you want - so that you feel taken care of. **RELY** is asking someone to do something for you.

*Have the **KNOW** level high, the **TRUST** level low, and the **RELY** level high.*

Would you be worried that your friend would totally drop and shatter the screen on your iPad?

That is because you are **RELYING** on your friend even though you don't really **TRUST** them.

Let's say all of your worst fears come true. Your friend drops it and shatters the screen. You'd probably feel angry, upset, and sad. That's totally understandable!

But, would you stop being friends with your best friend? Would you refuse to hang out with them anymore? Would you unfollow them on Instagram and never talk to them again?

I hope not! Hopefully you would still love them and eventually forgive them. Why? Because you are **COMMITTED** to them.

*Move the commit to the top on the RAM chart.*

When **COMMIT** is high in a relationship, you forgive and stay in the relationship. This means that you have a **PROMISE** to hang in there, to not quit, and to keep loving them no matter what happens.

The last important part of all relationships is loving **TOUCH**. We show others we care many times with a loving touch—we call this "showing affection". This could be a hug, a secret handshake, a high five, or a pat on the back. It is like the **PHYSICAL** ways you relate with God or others!! How you use your physical body to show that you care, or love, or help, or do what is good for another. It is the **ACTION STEPS**.

So let's go back to your friend... how would a best friend show you that they were sorry and respect you when they broke your iPad? What would be the **ACTION STEP** that they would take to make it up to you? (Probably, they would physically fix or have fixed your iPad). If they just used words without actions then that would be kind of empty. God wants us to put our loving words into loving actions... this is what **TOUCH** is all about.

The five parts of all relationships are: **KNOW, TRUST, RELY, COMMIT, and TOUCH.**

**Read Matthew 14:22-32.**

The disciples were out on a boat in the night. A storm kicked up and the disciples were in trouble. It was dark, windy, the waves were huge; and then they looked out and saw someone walking on the water.

People don't walk on water!

In fact, they thought they were seeing a ghost!

But, Jesus shouted out to them, "Don't be afraid! Take courage. I am here!". He wanted them to **KNOW** it was him.

Even though Jesus called out to them, Peter still did not know for sure it was Jesus.

So he said, "Lord, if it's really you, tell me to come to you, walking on the water". You see, Jesus had spent a lot of time with Jesus. He had heard his teachings and seen him perform miracles. Because of this, Peter **TRUSTED** that Jesus was powerful and could make him also walk on water.

Peter does walk on the water as he fully **RELIED** on the Jesus.

*Example of the chair:* You can look at a chair, and trust or believe that the chair will hold you, but if you do not actually sit on the chair, then you are not relying on the chair. Peter had **TRUST** that Jesus had the power to make him be able to walk on the water, but only when Peter stepped out of the boat and onto the lake, did he truly **RELY** on Jesus.

However, Peter stopped relying on Jesus. He started to focus on the wind and the waves instead of Jesus; he stopped relying on the Jesus and began to sink.

Peter became afraid. He lost trust and stopped relying on Jesus, but he was **STILL COMMITTED** to the Jesus. Peter shouted, "Save me, Lord!"

Peter **knew** Jesus, and actually **trusted** Jesus to help him, but he was not **relying** on Jesus because he became too focused on the storm. However, he was still **committed** to Jesus—he did not give up asking Jesus for help.

Then, Jesus caught Peter with his hand. Jesus grabbed Peter by the hand – he touched his hand – and saved him.

After Jesus grabbed Peter's hand and saved him from sinking, he encouraged Peter to grow in his trust and to completely rely on Jesus. He asked Peter, "You have so little faith. Why did you doubt me?"

Peter's interaction with Jesus shows us all of that is involved in our relationship with God.

It is important to **KNOW** God,  
to **TRUST/BELIEVE** that God is good, loving and powerful,  
and to take what we know and believe about God and then **RELY** on Him to meet our needs, keep us safe, and fulfill all of his promises.

Being committed to God means that we **DO NOT QUIT**—that we keep praying, trusting, relying, and growing in our love for God.

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And ,TOUCH means that God entered into our world. He came to earth in order to touch our lives, go through what we experience and face in this life, be an example of how to live and love, and most importantly, to take our place on a cross so that we could be forgiven.

This story shows how we enter into a relationship with Jesus; how we get to know him, trust him, rely on his salvation for us, commit ourselves to him, and show his love to others. This is also how we daily keep GROWING in our relationship with Jesus.

**God wants you to have great relationships – with Him and with others.**

So, what does this mean for you? What does it mean for you to take Jesus' hand when you feel that you are sinking in some deep water - when life feels overwhelming and stressful? What does it look like for you to have a great relationship with God?

### Small Group Questions

1. How did Peter respond when he felt afraid?
2. What are some things that cause you to feel worried or afraid? Or feel that you might fail at something? How do you react in those situations? What does it mean for you to take Jesus' hand when you feel that you are sinking in some deep water - when life feels overwhelming and stressful?
3. What does your reaction say about your relationship with God?
4. What does it look like for you to have a great relationship with God?

*FYI—these five ways of growing in our relationship with God are not ALL or NOTHING... add to your discussion some talk about how we have times of really doing well and also times where we slip or slack off in each of these areas.*

How do we get to know God?

What does it look like to trust God?

How do you rely on God? What does that look like for you?

What does it mean to be committed to God?

“Touch” in your relationship to God means that Jesus was born with a wants you to use your physical body to show love to others in ways that honor Jesus... what are some ways you can do that? What are some ACTION STEPS you take to show others that you care about them and to honor the Lord? Can you also think of any physical boundaries that you practice to honor Jesus—ways you **hold back** in taking some physical action or some sexual action (if appropriate to ask your students).

5. So let's summarize by thinking of all the ways how can you grow in your relationship with God?

### Prayer

Jesus,

We thank you for Jesus coming down from heaven so that we could get to know you. We know that you are good and loving, and that you want us to trust you and rely on you. There are times when we begin to sink a little in the waves of life—just like Peter. But we stay committed to you and ask that you reach out your hand and help us whenever we need you. Help us to stay strong in our trust and faith in you.

Amen.