



1. A Rainy Afternoon



‘That was a marvellous dinner!’ exclaimed Dad.

‘It’s left a lot of dishwashing, though,’ answered Mum, frowning. ‘Still I expect the twins will help me, won’t you?’

‘We’ll lend a hand,’ he replied. ‘If the rain holds off, we’ll go out for our usual walk. But I don’t like the look of those dark clouds.’

‘It’s a pity when the weather’s wet or rough on Sundays, isn’t it, Dad?’ asked Sarah.

‘Why, because of our afternoon walk?’





Sarah and Paul

'No, not only because of that. I was thinking of how difficult you said it makes it for older people to get to church sometimes.'

'Yes,' agreed the twins' father. 'Still it's surprising how they manage. They put younger people to shame. Now, what about that dishwashing?'

Sarah and Paul groaned and screwed up their noses in disgust. 'Do we have to?'

'If you really want to please me,' Mum called out from the kitchen.





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'I wanted to read my library book,' complained Sarah.

'If you won't do it to please Mum, then I must tell you to do it because I say so,' said Dad.

Sarah and Paul looked at one another and guessed what the other was thinking - Dad meant them to obey him.

The kitchen draining board was covered with plates and cooking utensils waiting to be





Sarah and Paul



dried, and some of the messier things still had to be washed.

'It won't take long, twins,' said Mum.

Paul took two plates to dry at once, because he had seen his father dry them like that. 'I

can dry two plates together, Sarah.'

'No, you can't,' said his mother. 'You'll drop one.'

'I won't,' promised Paul. But no sooner had he said this than crash - a plate had fallen to the floor and had broken.

'There goes your pocket money for next week,' warned Dad.

Paul looked at Sarah with a grim kind of smile. 'Everything happens to me.'

'Poor thing,' answered his mother with a laugh, when she saw how sorry he looked. 'Oh, and now it's pouring with rain!'



'No walk then this afternoon,' exclaimed





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Sarah. 'Will you play with us, Dad?'

'OK,' Dad replied. 'But tell me first what you've been doing in your group today.'

'Learning the Ten Commandments.'

'Have you both learned them?'

'Yes,' said Sarah.

'All right, then; while we finish the dishes and put the things away, let me ask you some questions!'

'Can we take it in turns, Dad?'

'Yes, Sarah. I'll try to be fair, and I'll start with you. To whom did God give the Ten Commandments?'

'To His people, the Jews.'

'How did He give them to them, Paul?'

'God told them to Moses and Moses wrote them down.'

'Do you know





Sarah and Paul

where they're found in the Bible, Sarah?'

'We had to learn them from Exodus, chapter 20. But I think they're written down somewhere else too.'

'Yes, in the book of Deuteronomy. Why do you think God gave the commandments to His people?'

It was Paul's turn to answer. He thought for a moment and said, 'So the people would try to obey them and do what God wanted them to do.'





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'More than that, I think, Paul. What is a commandment?'

'Something you must obey; something like an order.'

'Do you have to obey any other sort of commandment?'

'Yes, at school and at home too. Our teacher gives us some, and so do you.'

Missing her turn, Sarah interrupted, 'Like when you told us to do the dishwashing.'

Dad laughed. 'Why then, Sarah, do you think you have rules and laws at school?'





Sarah and Paul



'To stop us from getting into trouble?' Sarah answered enquiringly.

'More than that! What would school be like if everyone did as they liked?'

'Wonderful!' shouted Paul.

'Not really,' Sarah replied. 'It would be horrible. No one would enjoy it at all.'

Dad nodded. 'God has given us His commandments to help us. They help us to understand what God is like. They tell us that He's good, kind and that He hates evil. They tell us how to please Him and show our love for Him. They show how to live happily together.'

Paul often found it hard to be well-behaved. He didn't really think it would be fun to have no rules at school and he knew it was silly to play with plates when drying them, but he acted stupidly at times. He wondered whether grown-ups found it as hard as he did to do the right thing.

'Are the Ten Commandments easy for you to obey, Dad?' Paul asked.





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'No, they're not. Can you think of any commandment you've broken, Sarah?'

'The one about being jealous?'

'Which commandment is that?'

'I've forgotten. Is it the "covet" one? Yes. It is. Mum explained what "covet" means.'

'What happens if we don't keep God's law, Paul?'

'God isn't pleased with us,' said Paul.

The twins' father was pleased with the thoughtful answers they were giving to his questions. 'Has anyone ever kept all of God's commandments, children?'

'No,' they said.

'Are you sure that no one - absolutely no one - has?'

Paul guessed what his father meant. 'Jesus did.'

'What's the punishment we deserve if we break God's laws?'

'To die, to be punished, and never go to heaven?' Sarah asked.

'Yes,' agreed her father. 'Why did Jesus have to die, then, if He had kept God's laws.'





Sarah and Paul

'To take our sins away.'

'All right, but what are our sins?'

'The things we do when we disobey the Ten Commandments,' Sarah answered.

'Very good, Sarah. If we try to obey the Ten Commandments, will we go to heaven?'

'No. We can go to heaven only if we trust in the Lord Jesus.'

Mum had been listening to the questions and answers and was impressed by all she heard. 'May I ask a question now? Can we forget about the Ten Commandments when we've trusted in the Lord Jesus as our Saviour?'

'Of course not,' said the twins in chorus.

Dad wondered how he could show the twins the importance of the Ten Commandments in a way that would interest them. He knew that some of the words were difficult.

'Are there words you can't understand in the commandments?' he asked, thinking of something he would like the twins to do. 'What about adultery?'

'I'm not sure about that, Dad. Is it like coveting?'

'Yes, Sarah. It's like





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stealing too. It means taking someone else's husband or wife and treating him or her as your own.'

'Like David?' asked Sarah.

Dad looked surprised. 'When did you hear that?'

'In church last Sunday in the sermon. David took Bathsheba and then he murdered her husband.'

The twins' mother laughed with pleasure. 'Mr Hill would be pleased to know that you listened to his sermon to the adults as well as the children's talk.'

'Well, you keep on listening like that, Sarah, and you too, Paul,' encouraged Dad. 'Would you like me to talk to you about the Ten Commandments as I once did about *The Lord's Prayer*?'  

'That's a good idea,' said Sarah.

'We could make it a project like last time,' suggested Paul.

'Good. The Ten Commandments are always important. Every day things happen which show how important they are. Tomorrow I'll give you each a note-book. On the first page write out the first commandment and then





Sarah and Paul

leave two pages. Then write out the second commandment and leave another two pages. Go on like this through the note-book until you've written down the tenth commandment.'

'What then, Dad?' asked Paul, getting interested.

'During the week, I want us to notice anything which shows us how important the Ten Commandments are.'

'What kind of things?'

'Well, if something happens at home or when we go out and about which shows how important they are, take note of it. If you see something in the newspaper or on the TV write it down. We'll talk about it together and try and understand what God is saying.'

'Sounds good,' said Sarah.

'I'm looking forward to it,' Paul added.

'And our half-term holiday starts tomorrow too!' shouted Sarah.





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Get Active!

A project and a memory test!

Why not have a notebook like Paul and Sarah? On the cover put the words *The Ten Commandments*. After reading each chapter, write down in your own words what you think the commandment means. Draw a picture or pictures to help you remember. Without looking them up, see how many of the commandments you can remember and write them down.

Book Look!

God, the Ten Commandments and Jesus

by Carine Mackenzie

ISBN 1 85792 850-4

This book illustrates the ten commandments. Discover Jesus and how he kept all these commandments.