

Scripture Reading: Exodus 20:1-17

Say what you will about the Ten Commandments, you must always come back to the pleasant fact that there are only 10 of them. —H. L. Mencken

Do you like ice cream? I do. But ice cream, especially the real creamy kind, has lots of calories.

Now there is an ice cream maker that claims to provide the creamy taste with fewer calories. I won't mention the name of this company, but it got started in 2012 when a former attorney decided to create a lower calorie alternative to traditional ice cream. Today, his low calorie ice cream is sold in pints around the world.

One of their advertising campaigns reminds us of all the things we tell ourselves that we should do:

- We “should” work out
- We “should” lose weight
- We “should” eat more salads
- We “should” skip desserts

The ad tells us to “Stop ‘shoulding’ yourself.” (Notice, the ad is telling us what we *should* do!)

But in life, we can't stop “shoulding” ourselves, can we? We should obey municipal, state and federal laws. We should wear seat belts. We should wear masks. We should practice social distancing. We should pay our taxes.

And, then, when we look at the Bible (like today's reading from Exodus, for example), we learn that there are at least 10 commandments that involve things we should and should not do. And the rest of the Bible has more: We should be kind one to another. We should be patient. We should share. We should put others first. We should pray. We should love God. We should love our neighbors as ourselves. We should be compassionate. We should be humble and resist pride. That's a lot of “shoulds”!

So, let's eat ice cream, if our doctors give us permission. But let's also remember that it is okay to remember the “shoulds” and the “ought to's” in our lives. We owe it to our communities, our houses of worship, our neighbors, our friends.

We owe it ourselves.

—Timothy Merrill

Prayer: God, thank you for giving us boundaries, guidelines and directions. We are happy to do what you ask us to do. Amen.

*Blessings,
Lisa & Pastor Ben Plotz*

Daily Bible Readings

- Sunday:** Leviticus 20-23
Monday: Leviticus 24-27
Tuesday: Mark 1-3
Wednesday: Mark 4-6
Thursday: Mark 7-10
Friday: Mark 11-13
Saturday: Psalms 25-28

VOW TO FIND A VOWEL!

Directions: We'll not only give you a vowel, but we'll give you a lot of them. The words in this brain-cruncher have vowels in unusual arrangements. See if you can guess the words from the clues provided. Find the secret message by transferring the circled letters to the appropriate spaces. Remember that the circled letter may be a vowel.

1. Brave: ○ _ _ _ _ _ E O U _ _
2. A dark profile: _ _ _ _ ○ O U E _ _ _ _
3. Circular: ○ O U _ _ _
4. Running away: _ _ _ E E ○ _ _ _
5. Savage, fierce: _ _ _ I O U ○
6. Strange, odd: _ U A I _ ○
7. A person from the 50th state: _ _ _ A ○ I A _
8. Compress, push together: ○ _ _ U E E _ _ _
9. A large tree in California: ○ _ _ _ U _ I A
10. Paddling in a small, narrow boat: _ ○ _ _ O E I _ _
11. Upright, moral and righteous: ○ _ _ _ _ U O U _
12. Lining up in a row: _ _ U E U ○ _ _ _
13. Gorgeous: _ _ E A U _ _ E ○ U _
14. Precipitation: ○ A I _

Secret Message:
Write here in the space provided.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14

March 2021

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
	1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29	30	31			

RIDDLE

A family lives in a large tower apartment building, 10 floors high. Every day their son takes the elevator from the family's apartment on the 10th floor to the ground floor and goes to school. When he returns in the afternoon, he uses the elevator to get to the fifth floor, and then uses the stairs for the remaining five floors. Why?

ANSWERS: 1. courageous; 2. silhouette; 3. round; 4. fleeing; 5. vicious; 6. quaint; 7. Hawaiian; 8. squeeze; 9. sequoia; 10. canoeing; 11. virtuous; 12. queuing; 13. beautiful; 14. rain. **Secret Message:** CHRIST IS SAVIOR. **Riddle:** Because the little kid cannot reach buttons higher than 5.