just10

Conversation Starter

Participant's Journal

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just10: Conversation Starter Participant's Journal
Philo Trust, Witton House, Lower Road, Chorleywood, Rickmansworth, WD3 5LB

www.just10.org

@jjohnglobal @jjohnglobal @jjohnglobal

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Introduction

I hope this series will help you apply the ancient wisdom of the Ten Commandments to your life today. May you be transformed and renewed.

Can I encourage you to build one another up in faith as you explore the amazing commandments God gave us.

What are the Ten Commandments?

The Ten Commandments are found in the Old Testament book of Exodus, written around 1445 BC. They are a set of instructions given to God's people, the Israelites. God had led the Israelites' ancestors, and then dramatically rescued the Israelites from slavery in Egypt. He then promised to love, guide and protect them forever. As a response to his love, God expected his people to keep the Ten Commandments.

For the Jews, keeping the Ten Commandments was an appropriate response to God's act of freeing them from slavery. Christians, however, live in the light of the cross and resurrection of Christ. We are not obligated to keep every Old Testament command. However, the Ten Commandments remain timeless instructions of God's principles and parameters: a framework for every culture and every generation to use for a godly life and a blessed society.

Teaching on the Ten Commandments

In January 2000, I commenced a series of area-wide, inter-church events in towns and cities across the UK, based on the Ten Commandments. Unlike the dos and don'ts most people imagine when asked about the Maker's Instructions, the principles were to be both a guideline and an encouragement; 'Thou shalt not steal' is entitled 'How to Prosper with a Clear Conscience' 'Thou shalt not commit adultery' is unpacked as 'How to "Affair-Proof" Our Relationships'.

Seeing the response to this series inspired me to write and teach on the Ten Commandments, developing *just10*. To date, over one million people have attended a live talk with many more exploring God's timeless principles in their own church community.

What is the purpose of this series?

This series is an opportunity to engage with the Ten Commandments. Each session will take a closer look at one of the commandments and unpack the principles and their implications for life today. We encourage you to watch and discuss an episode of *just10: Conversation Starter* and follow along with the questions on screen or in this *Participant's Journal*.

Session One

How to Find True Contentment

'You shall not covet your neighbour's house . . . or anything else your neighbour owns'. Exodus 20:17

Part 1

Today the word we use for covet is materialism. J.John pointed out three problems with materialism:

1. **Materialism can cause worry**
   Don't be greedy for what you don't have. Life is not measured by how much we own.
   Luke 12:15

2. **Materialism can cause weariness**
   Don't weary yourself trying to get rich. Why waste your time?
   Proverbs 23:4

3. **Materialism can cause gloom**
   Some people, craving money, have . . . pierced themselves with many sorrows.
   1 Timothy 6:10

Start a conversation

We lose our health to make money, and then we lose our money to restore our health.

How true is this of yourself, those in your family, and society as a whole?

Luke 12:15, in the Bible, reads: *Don't be greedy for what you don't have. Life is not measured by how much we own.*

How do you reflect on these words?

Part 2

J.John gave three principles to help each of us find true contentment:

1. **Look beyond what is temporary**
   We fix our eyes not on what is seen, but on what is unseen, since what is seen is temporary, but what is unseen is eternal.
   2 Corinthians 4:18, NIV

   Be a giver
   It is more blessed to give than to receive.

   Acts 20:35

2. **Find our significance and security in Jesus**
   J.John's illustration of the $20 bill showed that it doesn't matter how dirty or creased we think we are, we have never lost our value in God's eyes.

   But God shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.
   Romans 5:8

Start a conversation

2 Corinthians 4:18, in the Bible, reads: *So we fix our eyes not on what is seen, but on what is unseen, since what is seen is temporary, but what is unseen is eternal.*

How does this verse impact the way we live our lives?

J.John said:

Giving creates joy, saving creates peace, and living creates freedom.

Reflect on how we can apply these three principles to our lives.

Notes

Go deeper

- In your own time, or as a group, watch the rest of J.John's full talk for Session One at just10.org.
- Prayerfully reflect on the following passage, asking God to speak to you through it: 2 Corinthians 9:6–8.
- Is debt or money management a problem for you? Look up Christians Against Poverty (www.capuk.org) to access free advice on how to get out of debt.
- Read Chapter 1 (p.21) from the book *just10* by J.John (Philo Trust, 2023).

Session Two

How to Hold to the Truth

‘You shall not give false testimony against your neighbour.’

Exodus 20:16, NIV

Part 1

J.John highlighted that truth has only to exchange hands a few times to become fiction.

The basic message of the ninth commandment is that we must tell the truth, especially when it relates to other people; don’t ruin someone else’s reputation.

The Bible warns us about three types of false testimony:

1. Gossip
2. Slander
3. Flattery

Start a conversation

What motivates us to lie?

James 3:5, in the Bible, reads: *The tongue is a small thing, but what enormous damage it can do.*

What reflections do you have on these words?

Part 2

1. I need to examine my own heart

Jesus said: *Whatever is in your heart determines what you say.*
Matthew 12:34

The human heart is most deceitful and desperately wicked. Who really knows how bad it is? But I know! I, the LORD God, search all hearts and examine secret motives.
Jeremiah 17:9–10

2. I need to refuse to gossip

Hold to the truth in love.
Ephesians 4:15

The fabric of all healthy relationships is woven with truth. Lying tears this fabric apart and destroys confidence and trust in one another.

The reason that truth is so important to God is because truthfulness is part of his nature.

Start a conversation

J.John said: *I need to examine my own heart.*

Spend a moment considering your own response to today's message.

I need to refuse to gossip.

What practical things can you do to avoid gossip, slander and flattery?

Notes

Go Deeper

- In your own time, or as a group, watch the rest of J.John's full talk for Session Two at just10.org.
- Look up James 3:3–12 and reflect on this passage. How is God challenging you here?
- Are you accountable to anyone at the moment? Is there someone you could trust to ask you hard questions about the realities of your life and faith?
- Perhaps you could do the same for them, praying for and encouraging one another.
- Could you commit to not saying anything that has not passed the **THINK** test?
- Read Chapter 2 (p.47) from the book *just10* by J.John (Philo Trust, 2023).

THINK test?

T is it True?

H is it Helpful?

I is it Inspiring?

N is it Necessary?

K is it Kind?

Session Three

How to Prosper with a Clear Conscience

'You shall not steal.' Exodus 20:15, NIV

Part 1

Stealing is to take something that belongs to another person.

J.John highlighted two wrong ways to prosper:

1. **Dishonesty**
   The LORD demands fairness in every business deal; he sets the standard.
   Proverbs 16:11

   The LORD hates cheating, but he delights in honesty.
   Proverbs 11:1

2. **Defrauding**
   If you owe taxes, pay taxes.
   Romans 13:7, NIV

   Do not cheat or rob anyone. Always pay your hired workers promptly.
   Leviticus 19:13

Start a conversation

Have you ever been the victim of theft?

How did it make you feel?

J.John told us about his summer job cutting grass on roundabouts.

Did his story resonate with your experiences as an employee or as an employer?

Part 2

The right ways to prosper:

1. **Working**
   Work brings profit, but mere talk leads to poverty!
   Proverbs 14:23

   If you are a thief, stop stealing. Begin using your hands for honest work, and then give generously to others in need.
   Ephesians 4:28

2. **Saving**
   Good planning and hard work lead to prosperity, but hasty shortcuts lead to poverty.
   Proverbs 21:5

   Jesus commended the wise investor in the parable of the talents.
   Matthew 25:14–21

3. **Praying**
   Jesus said: *If you sinful people know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your heavenly Father give good gifts to those who ask him.*
   Matthew 7:11

   God . . . will supply all your needs from his glorious riches, which have been given to us in Christ Jesus.
   Philippians 4:19

Start a conversation

Proverbs 21:5, in the Bible, reads: *Good planning and hard work lead to prosperity, but hasty shortcuts lead to poverty.*

Have you been taking shortcuts in your work life?

Can you plan better with regards to saving money?

Philippians 4:19, in the Bible, reads: *God who takes care of me will supply all your needs from his glorious riches, which have been given to us in Christ Jesus.*
Do you have a specific need to bring before God today?

Notes

Go Deeper

- In your own time, or as a group, watch the rest of J.John's full talk for Session Three at just10.org.
- Is God calling you to repent (say sorry to him for a mistake and change your behaviour) today? If so, take some time alone with God to do this.
- Look up 2 Corinthians 1:12 and Acts 24:16. Ask God to guide you in how to conduct yourself with holiness and sincerity in your day-to-day work. Pray that he would sharpen your conscience.
- Read Chapter 3 (p.69) from the book *just10* by J.John (Philo Trust, 2023).

Session Four

How to 'Affair-Proof' Our Relationships

'Do not commit adultery.' Exodus 20:14

Part 1

Marriage is about giving; adultery is about taking.

Adultery breaks into the unity that two people have in marriage.

You have heard that it was said, 'You shall not commit adultery.' But I tell you that anyone who looks at a woman lustfully has already committed adultery with her in his heart. If your right eye causes you to stumble, gouge it out and throw it away. It is better for you to lose one part of your body than for your whole body to be thrown into hell.
Matthew 5:27–29

If you have committed adultery there is a prayer in the Bible: a prayer of confession from King David when he committed adultery with Bathsheba.

Create in me a clean heart, O God.
Psalm 51:10

Start a conversation

J.John spoke about the need to cancel adult channels on television and block pornography on computers and phones.

Do you need to take drastic and decisive action in this area?

J.John referenced Psalm 51 as a good way of repenting of sexual sin.
Take time to read this psalm.

Part 2

1. **Respect**
   Each man must love his wife as he loves himself, and the wife must respect her husband.
   Ephesians 5:33

2. **Responsibility**
   Each of you should look not only to your own interests, but also to the interests of others. Your attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus.
   Philippians 2:4–5, NIV

3. **Romance**
   May you rejoice in the wife of your youth . . . may you ever be captivated by her love.
   Proverbs 5:18–19, NIV

4. **Resolve**
   Didn't the LORD make you one with your wife? . . . Guard yourself; remain loyal to your wife.
   Malachi 2:15

Start a conversation

Consider the principles above.

What could you do differently to invest in your own marriage or to support someone else in maintaining theirs?

Philippians 2:4–5, in the Bible, reads:

Each of you should look not only to your own interests, but also to the interests of others. Your attitude should be the same as that of Jesus Christ.

How can you look to the interests of others this week?

Notes

Go Deeper

- In your own time, or as a group, watch the rest of J.John's full talk for Session Four at just10.org.
- If you are living with a guilty conscience, or need to repent for sexual sin, read Psalm 51 and use it to help you say sorry to God. What choices do you need to make in order to change?
- Read 1 Corinthians 6:9–20 and reflect on the similarities between the Corinthian culture and today's world. What challenges are we given in these verses? What hope does Paul offer?
- Read Chapter 4 (p.95) from the book *just10* by J.John (Philo Trust, 2023).

Session Five

How to Manage Our Anger

'You shall not murder.' Exodus 20:13, NIV

Part 1

You have heard that it was said . . . 'Do not murder, and anyone who murders will be subject to judgement.' But I tell you that anyone who is angry with his brother will be subject to judgement.
Matthew 5:21, NIV

There are 3 common expressions of anger:

1. **The Maniac**
   Those of us who explode, blow-up, throw things, yell, rage and spill out all over.
2. **The Mute**
   Those of us who operate with repressed anger hold our anger in, swallowing the pain. Usually our body feels the effects of repressed anger.
3. **The Manipulator**
   Those of us who retaliate in an underhand way: sarcasm, jibes, little insults and hurtful humour.

Start a conversation

The philosopher Lucius Annaeus Seneca once said: *Anger: an acid that can do more harm to the vessel in which it is stored than to anything on which it is poured.* **How true do you think this is?**

How much do you relate to the three common expressions of anger?

Part 2

How do we 'manage our anger'?

1. **Admit my anger**
   Admit it to yourself, your parents, friends, partner and to God. We make things worse when we pretend it's not a problem.

2. **Deal with anger immediately**
   'Don't sin by letting anger gain control over you.' Don't let the sun go down while you are still angry, for anger gives a mighty foothold to the Devil.
   Ephesians 4:26

3. **Understand anger**
   Anger is usually covering a hurt.
   If you look under the hurt you find expectation.
   If you look under that expectation you find a need.

4. **Stop and think before I speak**
   Be quick to listen, slow to speak, and slow to get angry.
   James 1:19

   A gentle answer turns away wrath, but harsh words stir up anger.
   Proverbs 15:1

5. **Ask God to fill you with his Holy Spirit**
   The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control.
   Galatians 5:22–23, NIV

Start a conversation

Try to be aware of when you become angry in the week ahead. Ask yourself these questions:

- **What is causing me to get angry?**
- **Am I seeing the full picture?**
- **How might Jesus react in this situation?**
- **How can I express my anger without hurting others?**

Galatians 5:22–23, in the Bible, reads: *The fruit of the Holy Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, gentleness, faithfulness and self-control.*

If you feel that you are lacking in any of these areas, ask God to fill you with his Holy Spirit today.

Notes

Go Deeper

- In your own time, or as a group, watch the rest of J.John's full talk for Session Five at just10.org.
- Euthanasia and abortion are just two examples of moral issues to which we need to apply biblical wisdom. With another member of your group, select one of these topics and discuss how the Bible passages we have looked at today can shape your approach to this issue.
- Read Chapter 5 (p.117) from the book *just10* by J.John (Philo Trust, 2023).

Session Six

How to Keep the Peace with Our Parents

'Honour your father and your mother, that your days may be long in the land the LORD your God is giving you.'
Exodus 20:12, ESV

Part 1

Honour our parents by:

1. Accepting them
2. Appreciating them
3. Affirming them
4. Not abandoning them

There is only one parent that has ever been perfect. That is our heavenly Father.

Start a conversation

J.John said:

> *This is the only commandment that does not last a lifetime. A day will come when we will not be able to make amends. It is tragic that some people give honour to their parents at their funeral, when it is too late.*

If your parents are still alive, consider your relationship with them. Is there anything you need to do to make amends?

Think of someone you know with a good relationship with their parents.

What could you learn from them?

Could you ask them for advice?

Part 2

The key to being good parents is to treat our children the way God treats us.

How does God treat us?

1. **God listens to us**
   The LORD is close to all who call on him.
   Psalm 145:18

2. **God understands us**
   To be like my heavenly Father, I need to understand my children.

   By wisdom a house is built, and through understanding it is established.
   Proverbs 24:3, NIV

   Are we perfect? No. But God accepts us. That's called 'grace'.

   God wants us to exercise grace with our children.

   - **We need to demonstrate honesty**
   - **Don't imply perfection and admit it when we are wrong**
   - **Keep our promises**

3. **God loves us**
   The Bible is full of examples of God's love for his children.

   We can express our love for our children through:

   - **Affection**
   - **Affirmation**
   - **Attention**

4. **God disciplines his children**
   The Lord disciplines those he loves.
   Hebrews 12:6

   Discipline provides a structure of safety until the child has enough structure in their character to not need it.

   Parents can discipline children best by being disciplined themselves.

Start a conversation

J.John said:

> *God wants us to exercise grace with our children.*

What does this look like practically for how you treat your own children?

How do you exercise grace with other people's children?

If you are a parent, what one thing is God calling you to do differently?

Notes

Go Deeper

- In your own time, or as a group, watch the rest of J.John's full talk for Session Six at just10.org.
- Look up Ruth 1:1–18. What surprises you about Ruth's relationship with Naomi? How is Ruth a model of honouring our parents?
- Think of someone you know with a good relationship with their parents. What could you learn from them? Could you ask them for advice?
- Read Chapter 6 (p.147) from the book *just10* by J.John (Philo Trust, 2023).

Session Seven

How to Prevent Burnout

'Remember the Sabbath day by keeping it holy.'
Exodus 20:8, NIV

Part 1

Like all of God's commandments, the Sabbath was designed not to be a burden but a blessing.

The Sabbath was made to benefit people.

Mark 2:27

Start a conversation

J.John said:

Partial faithfulness is no faithfulness at all.

How much of a priority has keeping the Sabbath been to you?

J.John highlighted that some people work on Sundays and so may need to have a Sabbath on a different day.

Think about your weekly schedule. When is your Sabbath?

Part 2

1. **The Sabbath: a day to rest our body**
   On that day no one in your household may do any kind of work. This includes you, your sons and daughters, your male and female servants and . . . livestock.
   Deuteronomy 5:14–15

   God modelled the Sabbath for us.

   For in six days the LORD made heaven and earth, but he rested on the seventh day and was refreshed.
   Exodus 31:17

2. **The Sabbath: a day to re-charge our emotions**
   He leads me beside quiet waters; he restores my soul.
   Psalm 23:2–3, NIV

3. **The Sabbath: a day to be renewed spiritually**
   Be still, and know that I am God.
   Psalm 46:10, NIV

   Worship renews our spirit as sleep renews the body.

   The Sabbath is a time for being in the presence of the Holy God and letting God shape our lives.

   Keep the Sabbath day holy. Don't pursue your own interests on that day, but enjoy the Sabbath and speak of it with delight as the LORD's holy day.
   Isaiah 58:13

Start a conversation

J.John said: *Many people worship their work, they work at their play, and they play at their worship.*

Do you resonate with these words?

Consider these questions:

Do you need to rest your body?

Do you need to recharge your emotions?

Do you need to be renewed spiritually?

Notes

Go Deeper

- In your own time, or as a group, watch the rest of J.John's full talk for Session Seven at just10.org.
- Time spent with God shouldn't be restricted to Sundays. 1 Thessalonians 5:16–18, NIV says, *Rejoice always, pray continually, give thanks in all circumstances; for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus.* Think of three ways in which you could weave more worship into your weekly activities.
- Psalm 34:14 tells us to *seek peace and pursue it*. How could you pursue peace? Spend some time reflecting on this psalm.
- How are you using your time? Fill in the table below and pray into what you see. Are there any other activities that deserve a row of their own?
- Read Chapter 7 (p.175) from the book *just10* by J.John (Philo Trust, 2023).

	Actual time spent hours a week	Ideal time spent hours a week
Work		
Travel		
Leisure/social		
Family		
Sport		
Shopping		
Computer/phone use		
Television		
Housework/cooking		
Church		
Relaxing		
Sleeping		

Session Eight

How to Take God Seriously

'Do not misuse the name of the LORD your God.' Exodus 20:7, NIV

Part 1

How do we misuse God's name?

1. **When we use it to insult**
   We have become numb to just how often and indiscriminately God's name is taken in vain. We should be concerned when God's name is used in a callous way.

   When we use God's name frivolously, we dishonour God and display irreverence.

2. **Don't use God's name to indulge yourself**
   We dishonour the name of God if we profess to be that which we are not.

   If you eat the bread or drink the cup unworthily, not honouring the body of Christ, you are eating and drinking God's judgement upon yourself.
   1 Corinthians 11:29

   To treat God Almighty as a tradition or superstition is to misuse his name.

3. **Don't use God's name to intimidate**
   Playing the 'God Card' – using God's name to justify our own point of view, to bring credibility to our own ideas.

Have we twisted the Bible to fit our own ideas and lifestyle?

Start a conversation

J.John said: *It should concern us when God's name is used in a callous way.*

Take a moment to reflect. Do you ever use God's name in a dishonourable way?

Think of how God's name has been invoked to sanction evils such as the Crusades in the Middle Ages, slavery, the Nazi agenda, and apartheid in South Africa.

How do we have discernment to know whether something is 'from God' or whether it is 'from us'?

Part 2

How do we take God seriously?

1. **Be selective with our words**

   Watch what we say.

   We are constantly bombarded with profanity. It comes in and unintentionally becomes part of our vocabulary. When we say what we please, does what we say please God?

   Decide today not to use the name of God in an irreverent, frivolous and disrespectful way.

2. **Be sincere in our actions**

   Let's make sure our life matches what we say we believe. If you are a Christian, make sure your walk is consistent with your talk.

   People claim they know God, but they deny him by the way they live.
   Titus 1:16

Start a conversation

J.John asked: *When we say what we please, does what we say please God?*

Are we too compromising when it comes to profanity?

Someone wrote: *If you were arrested for being a Christian, would there be enough evidence to convict you?*

How would you respond?

Notes

Go Deeper

- In your own time, or as a group, watch the rest of J.John's full talk for Session Eight at just10.org.
- Read Exodus 3:1–15. How do you think Moses understood God after this experience?
- Read Philippians 2:9–11 and pray for friends or family who don't yet know Jesus.
- Read Chapter 8 (p.199) from the book *just10* by J.John (Philo Trust, 2023).

Session Nine

How to Know God

'You shall not make for yourself an idol in the form of anything in heaven above or on earth beneath or in the waters below.' Exodus 20:4–6, NIV

Part 1

An idol is a substitute for the real thing and God's response to our idolatry is jealousy.

In the Old Testament, idolatry is called adultery to God, because idolatry is unfaithfulness.

To whom, then, will you compare God? What image will you compare him to?
Isaiah 40:18, NIV

Idolatry occurs when we hold any value, idea or activity higher than God.

J.John suggested three things that we might idolise today:

- **The Body**
- **Superstitions**
- **Choice**

Start a conversation

Idolatry occurs when we hold any value, idea or activity higher than God.

Is there anything in your life that has taken a higher position than God?

Do you place too much emphasis on physical beauty, wealth, fame or power?

Are you allowing superstitions to have power over your life?

Have you brought 'pick and mix' culture into your Christian faith?

Part 2

How do we know God and how do we describe him?

Jesus Christ *is the image of the invisible God.*
Colossians 1:15, NIV

The Son is the radiance of God's glory and the exact representation of his being.
Hebrews 1:3, NIV

It is sad that the benefits we expect idols to give, God promises to give.

They make idols, but the idols will disgrace their makers, for they are frauds. They have no life or power in them. Idols are worthless; they are lies!
Jeremiah 10:14–15

The God who offers us:

1. **Forgiveness**
2. **Freedom**
3. **Fulfilment**

Start a conversation

J.John said: *The turning point in our lives is when we stop seeking the god we want and start seeking the God who is.*

How do you reflect on this phrase?

J.John said: *If we seek fulfilment from things, we won't find it. But in seeking Christ, we find the most fulfilling thing imaginable.*

Have you found fulfilment in Christ?

Notes

Go Deeper

- In your own time, or as a group, watch the rest of J.John's full talk for Session Nine at just10.org.
- In the full talk, J.John said, *If you don't know what you stand for, you'll fall for anything.* Reflect on this phrase. What do you stand for?
- How does the prophet Jeremiah respond to idolatry in Jeremiah 10:1–16?
- If you have identified an area in your life where you particularly struggle to put God first, ask a friend to keep you accountable in this area for a period of time, and set aside time to pray together.
- Read Chapter 9 (p.217) from the book *just10* by J.John (Philo Trust, 2023).

Session Ten

How to Live by Priorities

'I am the LORD your God . . . You shall have no other gods before me.' Exodus 20:2–3, NIV

Part 1

This commandment is all about putting God first in our life.

He longs for us to love him with all our heart, with all our soul, with all our strength, and with all our mind.

See Luke 10:27.

Start a conversation

Where is God in the car of your life?

Loving God means that having made him number one in our lives, we constantly re-affirm that decision, checking to see if he is still number one.

Take a moment to reflect on whether God is currently number one in your life.

Part 2

How do we put God first in our life?

Here are five areas where God wants to have priority:

F – Finances

I – Interests

R – Relationships

S – Schedule

T – Troubles

1. **Put God first in my finances**
   How we spend our money reveals what is important. If God comes first place in our finances, it's a good sign that God's first place in our life.

2. **Put God first in my interests**
   Whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do it all to the glory of God.
   1 Corinthians 10:31, NIV

3. **Put God first in my relationships**
   Do you stand up for Jesus in your day-to-day interactions with other people?

4. **Put God first in my schedule**
   We can get so busy that we forget God. We need to establish the habit of time alone with God, regular prayer and Bible reading.

5. **Put God first in my troubles**
   We all go through problems, pressures and crises. Put God first in every area of our lives including the hassles of life.

Start a conversation

We know that God is first in our lives when he is F.I.R.S.T. in our: Finances, Interests, Relationships, Schedule, Troubles.

Take time to consider your relationship with God in each of these areas.

Think again about the car of your life. Where is God?

Do you want to reposition God in your life?

Notes

Go Deeper

- In your own time, or as a group, watch the rest of J.John's full talk for Session Ten at just10.org.
- How is God calling you to move forward from here?
- Reflect on a decision you made recently. To what extent did God play a part in it? Will you make any changes to the way you make decisions in the future?
- Read and reflect on Joshua 24:1–28.
- Read Chapter 10 (p.239) from the book *just10* by J.John (Philo Trust, 2023).

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Conversation Starter

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