

WRITTEN IN STONE

When the Lord finished speaking to Moses on Mount Sinai, he gave him the two tablets of the covenant law, the tablets of stone inscribed by the finger of God.

—Exodus 31:18

INTRODUCTION

Have you ever looked at a page of sheet music? There are a lot of black lines and dots and symbols all over the place. It's pretty cool looking and impressive, but it's not at all what the composer had in mind when he wrote the song. The composer wasn't after lines and dots and symbols—he was after *sounds*! He wanted to put music in people's ears and minds and hearts. He wanted them humming and singing along and even dancing to his song.

Well, this is similar to God's desire. When he gave people the Ten Commandments and, later, the entire Bible, he wasn't after a couple of heavy stone tablets and a bunch of big, thick books. He wanted to put his laws in people's minds and hearts. He wanted them to live by his laws.

Today's devotion is based on Exodus 31:18, which says, "When the Lord finished speaking to Moses on Mount Sinai, he gave him the two tablets of the covenant law, the tablets of stone inscribed by the finger of God." The devotion is called "Written in Stone."

DEVOTION

"The cement truck's here!" Nate said. He and his parents watched the big truck back up to where their new driveway was going to be.

Nate's dad held up his hand. "That's good!" The driver got out and set up the chute. He pulled a lever, and the gray, slushy mixture started pouring out. Using long-handled tools, he and Nate's dad moved the cement around. When the first section of the driveway was filled, they used other tools to smooth out the cement. Then the driver moved the truck, and they began working on the next section.

Soon the job was done. Nate stuck his palms in the wet cement, then wrote his name and the date with his finger. Everyone applauded. The driver said, "That's going to be there a long, long time!"

God used his own finger to write the Ten Commandments on stone tablets. But what he really wanted to do was inscribe his laws on people's hearts! Are God's laws written on your heart, so they're part of you forever? Memorizing Bible verses is a great way to help God put his laws right where he wants them to be.

WORDS TO TREASURE

"I will put my law in their minds and write it on their hearts," [declares the Lord].

—Jeremiah 31:33

QUESTIONS

1. Why, do you think, is God more interested in writing his laws on people's hearts than he is in writing them on stone tablets or in books?
2. If God really wants his laws written on people's hearts, why doesn't he just create people that way? In other words, why aren't people born with God's laws already written on their hearts?

Answer: God gave people the freedom to decide whether they wanted to receive his laws on their hearts. He didn't want a bunch of robots that were programmed to love and obey him. He wanted real *people* who would choose to love and obey him!

3. How can you tell if God's laws are written on a person's heart? By whether or not he or she has them memorized?

Answer: You can tell by their words, actions, and attitude. That's the only real proof. Memorizing God's laws is a great first step for a person to take toward achieving what God wants, but even if a person has all of God's laws memorized, that doesn't mean those laws are in his or her heart; at that point, they may only be in the person's mind.

4. Is it possible to have God's laws written on your heart if you dislike them and/or think they're stupid?

For a clue, either have children look up Psalm 119:97–104 or read this passage to them. The answer is no. You have to agree with God's laws, see the wisdom in them, and learn to love them in order for them to truly be written on your heart. This is what God really wants!

5. If God's laws aren't written on your heart, what *will* be? Will it be good for you or bad for you?

Answers: Some other "rules for living" will be written on your heart instead, such as the Devil's rules or the world's rules (those are rules that people make up all by themselves). It will be bad for you, because those other rules lead to evil and misery. God's rules are the only ones that lead to an abundant life here on earth and everlasting life in heaven.

Consider spending some time playing a game or doing an exercise to help children memorize the "Words to Treasure" Scripture verse.