October 21 – The Golden Calf – Exodus 32
God’s Holiness is revealed to His People…by His response to their disobedience.

Key Verse: 2 Corinthians 6:16b “As God said: I will dwell among them and walk among them, and I will be their God, and they will be My people.”

Summary: While Moses was on the mountain receiving the Law from God Himself, the people of Israel asked Aaron to make a golden calf for them to worship. He agreed, and when Moses returned, God’s holiness and justice demanded that He deal harshly with the people who so quickly turned their backs on the One True God.

Christ Connection: The Israelites faced a punishment for the sin they committed. God is holy; therefore, all sin must be punished. We also deserve to be punished for our sin. God, out of His grace, sent Jesus to die on the cross and bear the punishment that we rightly deserve. Our response to His grace should be whole-hearted worship and devotion to Him.

Home Connection: We don’t really make idols and bow down to them today, but there are things that steal our time, attention, and affection from God. We should make ourselves aware of these things and do everything we can to make sure that our devotion is to God alone.

Activity Options:

1. Smashing Idols
   Give each of your kids a piece of Play-doh. As you review the story, have your kids form the play-doh into the shape of a cow. Say something like, “We don’t really make statues and bow down to them in our culture, but we do let things steal our affection from God.” Lead your kids to make a list of what those things might be for your family. As you do, have them form the Play-doh into the one thing that they consider most important from that list. Then, as a family, smash your idols and pray that God would help your family be devoted to Him alone.

2. Ask Hard Questions
   As parents, our role is not just providing for our children, but also helping them navigate some pretty difficult situations. We need to be ready to face these challenges head on, from a biblical perspective, so that our kids will be ready when they have to do the same when they are on their own. Make a habit of asking your kids what their friends are into, watching, listening to, and if they feel pressured to do things they are concerned about. Then help them process those things by asking things like, “Do you feel that those shows are ok for a Christian to watch?” Over time, provide gentle guidance and verses of Scripture (Proverbs is great in this respect) to help them grow in wisdom about such things.

3. Dinner Time Discussion Questions
   At some point during the week, reread the Golden Calf story with your kids (Exodus 32). After you reread it, spend a few minutes at dinner asking the following discussion questions:
   - Why did Moses stay on the mountain so long? (God spoke to him and wrote the Ten Commandments on stone tablets.)
   - What did the Israelites ask Aaron to make for them? (An idol in the shape of a golden calf)
   - The Israelites broke the second of the 10 Commandments. What is the second commandment? (Do not make idols)
   - God chose to forgive His people, but those who had disobeyed were still punished by God. How did God punish the people? (Moses ground up the statue and made the people drink it. Also, God sent a plague to make the people sick, and others lost their lives.)
   - Idolatry, placing our affections/worship in a man-made object instead of God, is a serious sin. What are some modern day idols that we may have? How can we counter the temptation of idolatry and put God first in our lives this week?