

Putting God's Law in Its Proper Perspective

Q. What introduces the ten commandments?

A. These words introduce the ten commandments: "I am the Lord your God, who brought you out of Egypt, out of the land of slavery."

(Westminster Shorter Catechism Q&A #43)

Q. What does the introduction to the ten commandments teach us?

A. The introduction to the ten commandments teaches us that, because God is Lord and is our God and redeemer, we must keep all His commandments.

(Westminster Shorter Catechism Q&A #44)

“For the love of Christ compels us, because we judge thus: that if One died for all, then all died; ¹⁵ and He died for all, that those who live should live no longer for themselves, but for Him who died for them and rose again.”

(2 Corinthians 5:14-15)

When I was growing up I always prided myself in having great eyesight. While the majority of my friends were wearing glasses or contact lenses, I had for the majority of my life 20-20 vision. Things were always perfectly clear in regards to my sight and while everyone around me was busy having corrective eye surgeries or making their annual visits to the optometrist, I simply enjoyed the life of one who had clear and lucid vision. You'll notice however that I didn't say that I HAVE perfect vision (present tense), but that I HAD perfect vision (past tense)! Because about a year ago I began to notice that things weren't as clear in regards to my sight as they had previously been. I began to become aware that certain images seemed a bit blurry when I looked at them from a distance. And so much to my chagrin, I, for the first time in my adult life, visited the optometrist who proceeded to tell me that I did in fact need glasses since my right eye had begun to become near sighted with a nice dash of an astigmatism. And so now whenever I drive you will always find me wearing my glasses with feelings of nostalgia for those days gone by when I once saw things clearly.

You see, for me, prior to getting my new glasses, the world around me was beginning to become distorted. Things were beginning to be seen out of focus and my perspective on my surroundings was becoming more and more inaccurate. The reason that I am sharing all of this is because in our daily devotionals we are in the midst of studying God's Moral law that is found in the Bible, namely the 10 Commandments. And in the midst of studying through the 10 commandments, we as human beings have a natural tendency to look at these commands, God's moral laws, through the wrong perspective. As sinful, fallen human men and women, we have the proclivity to see the law of God through a distorted or misaligned lens.

Because more often than not, many of us come to passages in the Bible, like the 10 commandments, and we think that the way to be made right with God, is by meriting our own salvation by obeying God's commands perfectly on our own. We mistakenly believe that if we just work hard enough, or if we simply exert enough energy we can justify ourselves in the sight of God. Our innate fallen human tendency is towards self-justification. But, my friends, the reality is: that is not the teaching of the Bible! That is not the teaching of Christianity! That is not the good news of the Gospel. In fact, the exact opposite of that is what the bible teaches! **Romans 3:20** makes this perfectly clear when it declares, *"Therefore by the deeds of the law no flesh will be justified in His sight, for by the law is the knowledge of sin."* You see, God's law wasn't given to us so that we could have a list of rules that we could use to try and save ourselves. God graciously gave us His law so that we would come to understand that we need a savior. As the ancient theologian Augustine of Hippo once wrote, *"the law bids us, as we try to fulfill its requirements, and become wearied in our weakness under it, to know how to ask the help of grace."*

No my friends, we don't obey God's law in order to attempt to merit a right relationship with God on our own. We, as Christians seek to live our lives in obedience to God's Laws as an act of GRATITUDE for all that Christ has already done for us! It's Christ that perfectly obeyed the Law on our behalf, imputing His perfect record to those who place their faith in Him. As believers, we don't follow God's law in order to be saved...we follow God's law to say to the Lord, "this is how I am going to say thank You for saving us!". Have you ever noticed that in the preface to the 10 commandments, before even one command is given to us by God we read these words in **Exodus 20:1**, *"I am the Lord your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage."* God didn't give the Israelites the 10 commandments BEFORE He saved them...He gave them the 10 commandments AFTER they had already been saved! The Westminster Shorter Catechism in Q&A #44, in unpacking this verse asks the question, *"What does the introduction to the ten commandments teach us?"* And our catechism goes on to answer by saying, *"The introduction to the ten commandments teaches us that, because God is Lord and is our God and redeemer, we must keep all His commandments."*

In the days ahead as we continue to study God's law, we must keep God's commands in their proper perspective. We don't obey the law of God in order to be saved. We obey the Law of God in order to say, "thank you for saving us". Just as Paul tells us in 2 Corinthians 5:14-15, *"For the love of Christ compels us...and He died for all, that those who live should live no longer for themselves, but for Him who died for them and rose again."* That's the proper motivation for obeying God's law. That's the proper perspective!

Dig Even Deeper into God's Word!

Romans 12:1-2

Luke 1:74-75

1 Peter 1:14-19