

The TENDER Commandments  
Intro pt 3 Uses of the Law

**Intro to the Ten Commandments:**

Text: Exodus 19:1-6; Deuteronomy 4:1; 4:5-8

Last week we started a series on the Ten Commandments, and I said that we'd do 2-3 weeks of introduction.

WHEN WAS THE LAST TIME YOU TRIED TO OBEY THE Ten Commandments, OR even just ONE OF THEM?

IF you've ever tried to seriously obey even One command, in all its meaning, you probably found that it is not easy. If you're like me, and you are, you found that each commandment gets beyond some simple external level of obedience, and it hits the heart.

There Israel encamped before the mountain, <sup>3</sup> while Moses went up to God. The LORD called to him out of the mountain, saying, "Thus you shall say to the house of Jacob, and tell the people of Israel: <sup>4</sup> 'You yourselves have seen what I did to the Egyptians, and how I bore you on eagles' wings and brought you to myself. <sup>5</sup> Now therefore, if you will indeed obey my voice and keep my covenant, you shall be my treasured possession among all peoples, for all the earth is mine; <sup>6</sup> and you shall be to me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation.'

Let's review a bit and then look at some things that will give us some guides for living and keeping the Ten Commandments.

As a way of LONG INTRODUCTION to the series, let's review a couple of reasons why we should study the Ten Commandments.

Remember that THE Ten Commandments ARE SOMEONE WE MEET BEFORE THEY ARE SOMETHING WE OBEY.

We live in a world that has lost its moral center.

The Ten Commandments reconnect us to timeless, changeless wisdom and truth that God has given us for our own good.

We need to study them because they call us to grace.

They also calls forth the gospel in the life of the believer because it slays us and humbles us, thus driving us to Christ.

The good news is GOOD, in light of the reality of our own sin and the condemnation we deserve for violating the Law of God.

We looked at the **4 basic misunderstandings** that we have to remedy so we can appreciate the Law like Jesus does. Go to our website online or our **church app** and hear the messages.

We have seen how the context of Exodus 19:1-5 is so important for understanding the purpose of the Ten Commandments. As God's chosen people and treasured possession, Israel is to represent and reflect who God is to the nations.

WHAT DOES THAT LOOK LIKE? The answer is found in the Ten Commandments.

They were given to preserve and equip God's people in His mission to bless the nations.

## TYPES OF LAW, GUIDELINES of the Law, and USES of the Law

TYPES OF LAW – There are three types of law, and they are actually pretty easy to see. Ceremonial, Civil, and Moral law – WCF CHAPTER 19 is helpful

### **Ceremonial, -**

*In addition to this law, commonly called the moral law, God was pleased to give the people of Israel—as the church under age—ceremonial laws, which contained several typological ordinances. These ordinances consisted partly of worship, prefiguring Christ, his graces, actions, sufferings, and benefits, and partly of various instructions of moral duties. All these ceremonial laws are now abrogated under the new testament. WCF chap 19*

These are the laws that we read about in terms of sacrifices, clean laws, what can or can't be eaten, etc. They underscore the need for holiness unto God and the sacrifices point us to Jesus, the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world. These are fulfilled in Jesus

**Civil or Judicial Laws** – given to govern Israel in a particular time, place and culture. These laws were to guide the body politic of Israel as a Theocracy – rule by God. Those laws expired when the State of Israel expired.

They no longer obligate us “further than the general equity thereof may require,” i.e. that which is seen as a universal norm. We are not bound to them in a legalistic way. (The interpretation and application of “general equity thereof” is a whole other topic).

Civil laws were given to Israel to govern the way they behaved individually and corporately as a kingdom of priests and a Holy Nation. As the “new Israel”, the Church, is no longer bound except in that they may give us some principles or guidelines. THE visible CHURCH IS NOT A LEGAL STATE or geographic jurisdiction that enforces laws.

Jesus has fulfilled all the laws, so we don't need them, but can be guided by the wisdom or general equity of them.

**Moral law-** *The moral law binds all people at all times to obedience, both those who are justified and those who are not. The obligation to obey the moral law is not only because of its content, but also because of the authority of God the Creator, who gave it.*

*In the gospel, Christ in no way dissolves this obligation, but greatly strengthens it. WCF*

Jesus' own life is an example of one who love obeying the Law (instruction) of God. **1 John 5:3 “THIS IS THE LOVE OF God, that we keep His commandments.”** That was the heartbeat of Jesus Himself. He did not come to play down or diminish the law, but to fulfill it and to give an even deeper interpretation of it. – “you have heard it said..., but I say to you.”

There is nothing about what Jesus said or did that indicates that the moral law of God is not valid for believers.

It is NOT a way of self-salvation, but by the power of the Holy Spirit we are under an obligation of grace to follow the commands of God.

Matt 28:18-20 “make disciples, baptizing and teaching them to OBSERVE all that I commanded you.”

*“BUT WHAT Jesus commanded was to love one another”. YES, BUT WHAT DOES THAT LOOK LIKE? 1 John 5:2 “By this we know that we love the children of God, when we love God and observe His commandments.”*

*“They will know we are Christians by our love” 🎵, when we love God and do His commandments.*

In this way, we too are a kingdom of priests and a Holy Nation that reflects to the world what a great and gracious God we have.

So the moral law is valid to be used by believers, but how? (Glad you asked that)

### **GUIDELINES FOR USING AND OBEYING THE LAW – WCFLC Q 99**

Inside Out  
Swinging Doors  
Jesus Buddies

#### **Inside Out-**



(not a plug for the movie; I just like the graphic)

The movie does show that our “inside” life of thoughts and emotions is complex. God knows this and so the law requires the inner motivation as well as the outer obedience.

**To take the Law seriously, we must see that it applies to the inside heart issues, as much as the outside behavior issues**

EX: Jesus to Pharisees – You clean the outside of the cup, but the inside is dirty. You give the outward show of godliness, but on the inside you are whitewashed tombs and sons of your father the Devil.

What if I don’t have the right attitude, should I just not do the right thing? NO, do it repentantly, asking God to give you the right heart for doing the right thing. Confess the cold heart and pray Jesus into that place in your life. A godly heart attitude is someone you meet before it is something you live out.

No other Ancient Near Eastern culture had such a law. Their laws all dealt with the outside, but coveting is different.

EX: the 5 year old who is punished by having to sit in the corner; when asked about it, he says, “I may be sitting on the outside, but I’m standing on the inside.” - A HEART ISSUE.

#### **Swinging Doors**



The law swings both ways – what it forbids, it also requires the opposite

That as, **where a duty is commanded, the contrary sin is forbidden; and, where a sin is forbidden, the contrary duty is commanded:**

EX: “Don’t commit adultery” - Jesus points out the “INSIDE OUT” aspect – “if you look with lust in your heart, you’ve committed adultery” (as Jimmy Carter so famously learned)

“But I’ve never even done that” (liar). OK, but the SWINGING DOOR means it requires that you’ve always done everything to cherish your spouse and to nurture your marriage.

#### **Jesus Buddies WCFLC – Q 99: 7-8**

- 1) **What is forbidden or commanded to ourselves, we are bound, according to our ability, to endeavor that it may be avoided or performed by others, according to their duty.**
- 2) **What is commanded to others, we are bound, according to our places and callings, to be helpful to them; and to take heed of partaking with others in what is forbidden them.**

When God says, "I delivered YOU from bondage, and YOU shall not..." he is speaking to a Covenant People. Walking according to the Ten Commandments is a community reality. This means that in some way everyone needs to have a Band of Brothers or a Ya-Ya Sisterhood??

We need people in our lives who can deal with us like a "free fire zone" – a zone in combat where there is no limitation on the use of fire power. i.e. people who can speak freely into our lives. THAT DOESN'T happen in Sunday worship as we look at the back of peoples' heads.  
DO YOU HAVE A JESUS BUDDY who is committed to helping you obey God?

### USES of the Law

**MUZZLE, MAP , MIRROR**, – Philip Ryken

<https://stevedewitt.org/2014/01/12/the-ten-commandments-an-introduction/>

### Muzzle – Keeps us From Doing Wrong



(I was going to use a pic of Hannibal Lecter, but it was too creepy)

A muzzle keeps a dog from barking and biting and otherwise doing things he'd be inclined to do if there was no muzzle. A lawless society is one where people bite and bark and do whatever they want.

While the law stirs up our inner rebellion, it does also restrain, when there is a possibility of a penalty. The Law acts as a muzzle for our sin. Not perfectly, but it does help.

EX: what do you instinctively do on the highway when you see a cop? No. The law acts as a restraint—a muzzle. Sinners in society and community with one another need muzzles to keep us from the depths of our own depravity.

Scripture and the Spirit are God's gifts to help us "take every thought captive" and to "deny ungodliness and worldly desires", to "put to death the deeds of the flesh so we might keep in step with the Spirit."

### Map – Guides our Life and Conduct



TRUE CONFESSON OF A MAP NERD - I love maps. When I was around 3-4<sup>th</sup> grade I had a trashcan in my room that had a map of the United States

Joining AAA was like heaven – Free maps, even if you weren't going on a trip. Welcome centers – free maps.

Now, even though I have GPS, I'll usually look at a map- paper or google to see where I'm headed and get a sense of directions before starting out. (Maybe that's just because I like to be in CONTROL.)

A map shows us where we should go. We are, as Chesterton said, "a people with our feet firmly planted in mid air." That is a picture of where we would be without God's moral map. What's right? What's wrong? In an age that has lost its moral center, the operative word seems to be "whatever." HOW'S THAT WORKING FOR US? Drugs, family breakdown or lack of ever coming together, social strife, violence, etc.

We would do well to remember How gracious it was of God to provide us with a moral map. How are Christians who want to please God supposed to live? God's law provides the answer, like a map.

Current reading on Forbes, etc shows the idea that we "need a compass, not a map."  
As a believer we have both- the scripture does give us a map of sorts, but at times we find ourselves in situations where there is no clear direction, and we need a compass. God provides that through the Holy Spirit and the wisdom of community.

### Mirror – Shows us our Sin and Need for a Savior



Did that which is good [the law], then, bring death to me? By no means! It was sin, producing death in me through what is good, in order that sin might be shown to be sin, and through the commandment might become sinful beyond measure. (Romans 7:13 ESV)

In other words, the moral law of God shows us how massively short we fall to the righteous standard of God. It shows how corrupt our hearts truly are. Like a mirror, in the law we see ourselves as we truly are in the eyes of God. It isn't pretty.

Donald Barnhouse makes the point that mirrors call us to action; they call us to do something about it.

EX: Have you ever passed by a mirror and seen something you didn't like and thought, "YIKES, Do I really look like that? Has my hair been messed up all day? Why didn't someone tell me I had that big smudge on my face?"

Mirrors reveal, but they are totally useless to bring change. The mirror drives us to the sink and the soap and the water, or to get a comb or brush or to the gym to exercise, etc.

So too, the Law reveals and exposes our hearts, but the Law can't save us or change us. Apart from knowing the grace of God in Christ, the Law is a weight that condemns us. It's the burden that Christian carries in Pilgrim's Progress, UNTIL HE MEETS Jesus.

We need someone to relieve us of the burden, and Praise God, there is such a one.

Obedience to the Ten Commandments is **SOMEONE we meet before it is something we do.**

In despair over his frustration that he "does what I don't want to do, and doesn't do what he does want to do", Paul cries out, "Who will set me free from this body of death?" (Rom 7:24)

It's ALL ABOUT THE "WHO", not a "What".

It's not what we do, but Who we know and what He has done.

Jesus was clean from the Inside Out; he kept all aspects of the Law, and He gives a Spirit Buddy to those who know Him.

Jesus didn't need a muzzle; He IS THE MAP; and when He looked into the mirror of the Law, it revealed a completely righteous man in heart, word, motive, and deed.

When we abandon our self-salvation efforts and come to Him by , we get His righteous record credited to our account. That's how we get saved.

As we continue to look to Him and what He did for us, we are changed – that is called growth or sanctification.

When we get His heart, we can then rejoice in the Law as a gracious gift from a loving Father.

We can say with the Psalmist “How blessed (happy) are those whose way is blameless, who walk in the Law of the Lord. How blessed are those who observe His testimonies, who seek Him with all their heart... O, how I love they Law; it is my meditation day and night.” Ps 119:1,2, 97

**The ABC's of coming to faith –**

**A - Admit that you're weak and need grace and strength – That means there is GOOD NEWS FOR YOU**

**B- Believe that Jesus is the only savior who can heal your heart.**

**C- confess to God that you want to trust Jesus as your savior and Lord**

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