

God's Law - The Ten Commandments



The life of a Christian is one of confidence; confidence that our sins have been paid for; confidence that we have a right relationship with God; confidence that we have a hope and future in heaven. Another word for that confidence is **faith**.

Odd as it may sound, God gave us his Law so that we could have confidence; confidence that we cannot do enough to make ourselves right with him; confidence that we need a Savior; confidence that we would be lost without him. And confidence that we know how to live for him once he has saved us.

Every culture, every society, every country on earth operates with laws – rules that govern how people are to act. Laws preserve order and provide for the needs of citizens. But laws can also be unfair, unjust, or they can be abused. In many countries, laws are made to protect those in power and to suppress threats to power.

God's Law is different. God's Law shows us what "Good" is and tells us how God expects us to live. But we need to be careful not to think this means that we can be right with God just by trying hard enough to follow his Law. As we'll see in this course, God gives us his Law for very specific purposes that lead us to rely more fully on Jesus.

Through your learning in this module, you will:

- Understand what God's Law is and how the Ten Commandments summarize it
- Understand how the Law shows us to love God fully
- Understand how the Law shows us to love our neighbor as God does
- Understand how God's Law helps us see our need for Jesus
- Understand how to use God's Law as a guide in our sanctified living

What is God's Law?

As a family, read Psalm 1, or use a website or app to have it read to you.

In verse 2 it says that a righteous person's delight is in "the Law of the Lord." The Old Testament word for "Law" is "**Torah.**"

Have you ever heard that word before? Maybe you know someone who follows the Jewish faith who uses it.

Torah simply means "**Instruction.**" Often when we read the Old Testament and we see the word "Law," it is not referring only to God's dos and don'ts, but to all of God's instructions for his people. This is important to remember so that we don't turn his promises into a Law or think that by following his dos and don'ts we'll be able to make ourselves right with him.

God's instructions for his people also include his gracious promises. Look at what he says about himself in Exodus 34:6-7:

"The Lord, the Lord, the compassionate and gracious God, slow to anger, abounding in love and faithfulness,⁷ maintaining love to thousands, and forgiving wickedness, rebellion, and sin. Yet he does not leave the guilty unpunished; he punishes the children and their children for the sin of the parents to the third and fourth generation."

Consider some of the things that passage is telling us about God:

- He is a gracious and loving God who forgives sins.
- He is also a just and holy God who punishes those who refuse to obey him.

Unless we realize that our sin is deserving of this punishment, we will never understand how good it is that God forgives us or how great his mercy toward us is. **This is why he gives us his Law – so that we know we need forgiveness, and so that we know we can find it only in him.**

Family Discussion: Have you ever been tempted to think that the Law was just there to show you how to get right with God? What led you to think that way, and what helped you understand differently?

Three Types of Law

God gave his Old Testament people – the people of Israel – a long list of rules and regulations in the books of Exodus and Leviticus. All total, there are 613 specific commands they were to follow.

Some of the commands governed their day to day lives as a nation. They included rules about:

- Marriage
- Employment
- Fair trade
- Purchase of land
- Treatment of slaves
- Illegal behavior and how to punish it

We refer to these commands as the “Civil Law” of the Old Testament.

Some of those commands governed their worship and devotional lives. They included:

- What made a person clean and unclean
- What sacrifices they were to bring and when
- How the Priests and others were to lead worship

We call these the “Ceremonial Law” of the Old Testament.

The Ten Commandments are included in those 613 commands (they are actually the beginning). The Ten Commandments summarize God’s will for his people in ten short statements. We call this God’s “Moral Law.”

Many Christians have been confused by misunderstanding the purpose of these different categories of laws. Some think that all Christians have to follow all 613 commands. The New Testament makes it clear in many places that this is not God’s intent. The Law existed to set Israel apart as a nation so that they could point people to the true God and preserve the line of the Savior.

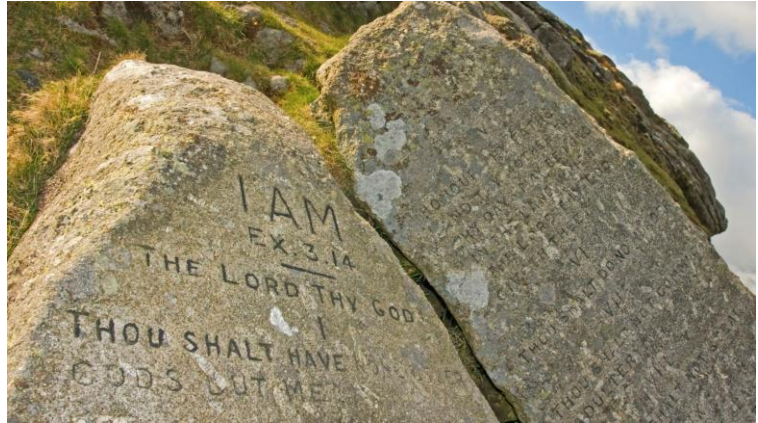
But the Ten Commandments still serve as a good summary of God's will for his people, and so Christians study them as a way of understanding what God wants from us.

Take a look at the Bible Project video titled “The Law” on YouTube to get a better understanding of the Old Testament Law and how it fits in the story of the Bible.

A Summary of God's Will

As a family, read Exodus 20:1-21.

Family Discussion: If the Ten Commandments are a summary of God's will for his people, then we should be able to tell a lot about what is important to God by looking at them. Based on your reading of the Ten Commandments, what are some things you think are important to God? (Try to have everyone in the family choose 1-2 things.)



Two Tables of the Law

You've probably seen plenty of pictures of the Ten Commandments, with the two tablets and the writings on them. You might have noticed that they often have numbers 1-3 on the first tablet, and numbers 4-10 on the other. Why is this?

We don't actually know how the tablets looked, or which commandments were written on which tablet. The 1-3 and 4-10 arrangement is a guess, but it's a pretty good one. It's a good one because the first three commandments deal with our relationship with God, and the rest deal with our relationship with other people.

Read Mark 12:28-34. Jesus is asked what is the most important commandment. Rather than reciting any one commandment, how does Jesus summarize the Law?

Directions for this Course

During this course we will not be looking at every commandment individually. Rather we will be looking at what the Law is communicating to us, and how it helps us know Jesus better.

As you work through these lessons, go to the Ten Commandments section in your Catechism and begin reading through each commandment and Luther's explanation. **Make a plan together to memorize all the commandments and explanations by the time you are done with these six lessons.**

Suggested activity: Make a sticker chart with a column for each person in your family (including parents!), and a row for each commandment and explanation. Whenever someone gets a sticker for each commandment, go out for ice cream!

Want another resource for better understanding each of the Commandments?

Check out the short videos on

<https://www.lutherhouseofstudy.org/category/index.php?Category=Commandments>

and the study guides that go with them. We would encourage you to work through all ten of them by the time you finish this course.

Love for God

As we saw in the last lesson, it's a good guess that the first tablet of the Ten Commandments was about the first three. They talk about how to love God and listen to him. Let's see what that means.

First for a reason

"You shall have no other gods."

If God is the one true God, doesn't it make sense he would say, "Don't treat anyone or anything as more important than me?"

But it's also good for us to worship him alone. **Discuss: Why is it good to worship only the one true God?**

Fear, Love, and Trust

Luther's explanation to the First Commandment says we are to "fear, love, and trust in God above all things."

- Fear = reverence, awe, and the conviction that he really is everything he says he is
- Love = commitment, devotion, and the conviction that he satisfies our every need
- Trust = belief and confidence that he will keep his promises and that he is always good

Sin is always going against one of these key ideas:

- Fear = we think we can keep our sin secret, or that it's not really a big deal, or that there aren't really consequences for sin
- Love = we find someone or something else in life that is more important to us than God is, and so we do what we shouldn't out of devotion to those things
- Trust = we are afraid that we won't be happy or have meaningful lives if we live God's way, or we aren't patient for God's timing, or we think we just know better

Every sin is first of all breaking the First Commandment – it is not letting God be God and letting him have total authority over our lives.

Family Discussion: Parents, think about time when you were not letting God be the authority over your life, when you were holding onto your own ideas about what to do or how to live and not letting God's Word be the final authority. Tell your children the story of how you worked through that to a greater reliance on God. It's good for our kids to know that we too have struggled, and how we came to put God as number one.

Okay, but how do we keep God number one in our lives? That's where the next two commandments are a perfect follow-up...

God's Name

Your name is important to you. It tells people who you are, and when someone says your name, it makes people think about you. So, what do you want people to think about you?

God's name is the same: When people hear "God" or "Lord" or "Jesus," it should lead them to think about who he is, what he's done, and why he is good.

There are two ways to define "God's Name":

- All the names God gives himself in Scripture that say something about him
- All the titles we might give to God that describe him as he is

How many different names for God can you think of? Give everyone in the family a sheet of paper and set a timer for 2 minutes. Have everyone write down as many names for God as they can in the 2 minutes. Who came up with the most?

After you're done, follow this link: <https://urbanareas.net/info/100-biblical-names-god/>

Take a look at the list. Have everyone in the family choose one name that they like the most and explain why.

God tells us to use his name properly: to glorify him, to call on him, to tell others about him. Or, as Luther's explanation says it, "to call upon him in every trouble, pray, praise and give thanks."

Read Numbers 6:22-27. Notice what God says at the end? When God blesses people, he “puts his name on them.” You carry the name of God. This gives you two reasons to follow his commands:

- You have been given the status of “Child of God.” Live like a child of God, doing what God wants you to do.
- Your life is a testament to who God is. Give him glory in all you think, say, and do.

God's Word

As you learned in the Bible mini module, the Bible is God’s Word. It is more than just someone’s ideas about God. It is actually God himself speaking to us.

The Third Commandment talks about the Sabbath, keeping a day of rest and not doing work. We might wonder, “What does that have to do with God’s Word?”

The Old Testament believers understood that part of keeping the Sabbath was to have a day to focus on hearing God’s Word. They gathered together to listen to the Word and study it together on the Sabbath.

New Testament Christians learned from Jesus that the Sabbath was a picture of the rest he would bring, rather than a legalistic requirement for all time. But they still believed it was important to set aside time to worship, to hear God’s Word, and to pray with each other. They started doing that on Sunday (see Revelation 1:10, where John writes that “on the Lord’s Day” he was spending time in prayer and meditation - they called it “the Lord’s Day” because it was the day that Jesus, their Lord, rose from the dead).

Luther wrote in his explanation that keeping the Third Commandment is really about making time to hear and learn God’s Word.

Thinking back to the First Commandment, if God is my number one, and he has authority in my life, then don’t I want to hear his voice?

Read Isaiah 55. This chapter is really about God’s Word. What is he telling us about how to grow closer to him?

Read Psalm 1. When it says that a righteous person “meditates” on God’s Word, it uses a word that essentially means to be thinking about it all the time. There are four activities associated with the word “meditate:”

- Knowing
- Studying
- Memorizing
- Doing.

Family Discussion: If you had to give yourself a grade (A to F) on each of those four “meditating” activities, how would your report card look? Take a minute as a family to give yourselves a grade for each of them. Then talk about how you could improve those grades.

Check out the video “The Bible is Meant to be Read Over a Lifetime” by The Ten Minute Bible Hour on YouTube. What if the Bible isn’t first about what it says to you, but about what it says about God?

Where do I stand with God?

These three commandments are all about our relationship with God. So we have to ask ourselves the simple question: Do I love God with all my heart, soul, mind, and strength?

If I compare my life to the first three commandments, I have to ask:

- Have I always loved God first and foremost and been completely devoted to him?
- Have I always glorified God’s name in everything I’ve thought, said, and done?
- Have I always made a priority of listening to God’s voice by spending time in his Word?

The answer to all three of these questions is most certainly “no.” That’s true for each and every one of us. So, what does that mean?

Later we will see why God has given us his Law, and the answer to this struggle. For now, it’s a good time to do what we always should do when we realize we have failed to live up to God’s righteous standard.

Read Luke 18:9-14. Jesus shows us two men. Both prayed to God. They each had different prayers. One went home justified. Who was it?

Our response to God's Law, when we know we have failed, is to say what the Tax Collector says, "God, have mercy on me, a sinner."

Prayer of Confession

Family activity: 1 John 1:8-9 tells us it is good to confess our sins to God. As a family, take some time to work together and write a prayer of confession, based on the first three commandments.

First Table of the Law wrap up

So now we understand how the first three commandments show us that we are to love God with our entire being - heart, soul, mind, and strength. What does the second table of the Law show us?

Love for Others

The first table of the Law is all about our relationship to God. The second table is about our relationship with our neighbor. Remember Jesus words? “Love your neighbor as yourself.” How do the fourth through tenth commandments help us understand that?

Loving God’s Creation

All things and all people are made by God. God loves his creation. He loves the people he made. The whole story of the Bible is about how God loved his creation so much he would do anything for them, including sacrificing his own Son.

Parents, how would you feel about someone else mistreating your children? Maybe you’ve experienced that. Does it make you sad? Angry? Listen to the song by Andrew Peterson titled “Rise Up” (you can find it on YouTube or Spotify). As you listen, have some paper and something to write with. Write down words, phrases, or lyrics that jump out to you, or what thoughts come to mind.

In Commandments 4-10, God is telling us how he wants us to treat his creation. But to understand that we have to grasp how deeply God loves his creation. From the moment it fell into corruption, God has been promising redemption and working for it, up to and including the sacrifice of his own Son. If God loves his creation that much, he certainly wants his people to love it as well and protect it as he does.

Family Discussion: Parents, choose any two commandments (from commandments 4-10) and talk about how God is protecting other people through that commandment.

Reflecting God's Character

One of the reasons we want to follow the commandments is because they reflect God's character. He wants us to be like him. Ephesians 5:1 says, "Be imitators of God." God's commands show us how.

Think of a few examples from these commandments (note, if you haven't gotten to these in your memorizing or talking as a family, take a moment to look them up in your catechism and see how Luther's explanation helps us see God's character):

- Fifth Commandment: God is the creator of life and values all life, so he asks us to protect and care for life.
- Sixth Commandment: God is faithful and deeply committed to us, so he asks that we protect the faithfulness and commitment of marriage.
- Seventh Commandment: God is the giver of all blessings, so he asks us to respect the blessings he has given to other people.
- Eight Commandment: God wants his name to be glorified, so he asks us to also protect the good name of other people.

When we see the commandments as a reflection of God's character, it helps us see that God isn't trying to spoil our fun or just give us rules to follow. He wants us to be like him.

Family Discussion: Have you ever been tempted to think of the commandments as nothing more than rules you have to follow? How does reflecting God's character change your understanding of the commandments?

Living Well

God designed us. He knows what is best for us. He designed the world to work a certain way, and we will live best when we live the way he asks us to.

But wait! Don't people sometimes have plenty of comfort, friends, and fun, even while breaking God's laws?

Can you think of a time you did something you knew was wrong, but it felt good while you did it? Did it still feel good later when trouble came?

Living contrary to God's Law may seem good for a while. But it always brings pain and trouble. We often don't see the consequences of our sin until much later.

A few examples of how living according to God's Law would make our lives better:

- If you respect people in authority, you can more easily keep a job, avoid trouble with the law, and get along with people.
- If you respect God's gift of sex, it will be a blessing in your marriage.
- If you are truthful and honest, people will trust you and speak well of you.

You might notice that the Fourth Commandment says, "Honor your father and mother ***that it may go well with you, and you may enjoy a long life on the earth.***" God is not promising that he will give us a karmic reward for doing the right thing. He is helping us understand that following that commandment (and all the rest that follow) leads to us getting along well in the world.

Family Discussion: Open a news website and browse through the headlines. Can you find examples of people dealing with trouble because they did not follow God's Law? On the other hand, can you find examples of people who lived according to God's Law and good things happened? Try to find at least one example of each. If you don't find them right away, keep searching!

Being Content

There's one more message in the second table of the Law. It's a simple one: Be content.

1 Timothy 6:6 says, "Godliness with contentment is great gain."

Contentment is the ability to be satisfied with what God has given you no matter the circumstances. **Read Philippians 4:12-13. See how Paul talks about contentment?** No matter the circumstances God gives him, he is confident that God loves him, and that Jesus is with him. That's contentment.

Let's look at a few examples of how these commandments encourage contentment:

- Fourth Commandment: Be confident that honoring and respecting your parents and others in authority is good for you, even when you don't agree with them.
- Sixth Commandment: Be confident that God's plan for marriage and sexuality is better for you than anything the world says.
- Ninth Commandment: Be confident that the home God has given you is good enough for you.
- Tenth Commandment: Be confident that the people and possessions God has given you are everything you could need.

If we believe that God is the authority in our lives, then we will trust that his commands are good for us, that they are for his glory, and that we can be content with everything he has given. Unfortunately, we often fall prey to the lies of the devil, the world, and our sinful nature. We struggle to trust God, and to let him be the authority. We don't always keep these commands. And that leads us into the true purpose of God's Law... (to be continued).

Family Discussion: Parents, was there anything in this lesson that was a new perspective for you on how to understand God's commandments? If so, share with your kids what was new for you. Students, what stood out to you the most as you went through this lesson? How did it help you better understand God's rules for your life?

Love for Others

While we still need to get through the next few lessons to help us understand how God's Law operates in our lives, one thing we know as Jesus-followers is that we want to put his Law into practice in our lives. We read it, and it encourages us to serve him.

One of the ways we serve God is by serving people. This is what the second table of the Law is all about.

This week, make a plan as a family to go and intentionally serve someone. Here are a few ideas:

- Choose a neighbor who needs some help and do something for them - rake a yard, clean a house, make a meal, or something else.
- Volunteer at a local shelter or other charity that helps people with physical needs.
- Take dinner to a friend or family, and then offer to just sit and talk.

You might come up with all kinds of other ideas, and we encourage you to pursue them!

Choose one way to serve another person or family, and then write about the experience. Keep that in a journal or some other place where your family can look back on it in the future.

Second Table of the Law wrap up

The second table of the Law is really about how we can love our neighbor as ourselves. But of course, looking at these commandments just reminds us how often we have failed to keep them. It's time to look at why God gave us the Law in the first place.

More Moral or More Dependent?

By now, as you've worked through the meaning of both tables of the Law, you've probably had more than a few moments where you realized you had not kept God's Law perfectly. If not, here's a simple set of questions to ask:

- Have I always loved God perfectly and fully with all my heart, mind, soul, and strength?
- Have I always treated people around me with love and respect in everything I have thought, said, and done?
- If the answer to either question is "no" or even "not really," then the simple truth is you are not perfect. Welcome to the club.
- In this lesson we're going to take a look at why God gave us the Law, and why it's still a good thing even if it constantly reminds us of how we have failed.

Did God give us the Law to make us more moral?

Did God give us the Law so that we would be better people?

As a family, read Romans 7:7-25.

Did you notice how Paul says that he "would not have known what sin was" until he read the Law. **What do you think he means by that?**

Earlier in Romans (skim through chapters 1 and 2) you'll see that Paul talks about how people know by nature what sin is, so clearly, he doesn't mean that with the Law we don't know sin *at all*. But he is reflecting something important about how the Law works in our lives: **As a mirror.**

What do you see when you look in the mirror? You see yourself, of course, but what do you notice about yourself?

Try this: Go to a mirror and stand in front of the mirror and look at yourself for five minutes. Take careful note of what you see.

Most people find it uncomfortable to look at themselves for that long. Like it or not, we start noticing our flaws. The fact is, we see our flaws much more clearly than other people do. Other people love you and think you are just fine the way you are.

The Law works as a mirror in this way: When we see what it says, we realize we don't do what it says. It shows us our sins. The reason the Law does this is so that we will look to Jesus for salvation. It may seem odd to say that it's a good thing to see our flaws, but it's better to see our sins and know we need a Savior than think we are fine without Jesus.

A good way to remember this is to think of S.O.S.:

S = Shows

O = Our

S = Sins

The Law as a Curb

There's another thing the Law does for us: it serves as a curb against our sinful nature.

Look up the video on YouTube: "Peace Devotions - God's Law is a Curb."

Very few of us would choose to do something crazy like rob a bank. First of all, we know it is illegal. Second of all, we know we would probably get in trouble. But most of all, we know deep down that it would be wrong.

**As a family, read Romans 13:1-7. What authority does God give to the government?
Discuss how this is an example of the Law serving as a curb against sinful behavior.**

Dependence on Jesus

The real purpose of the Law is simply this - to drive us to our knees so that we realize how much we need Jesus. We are not good enough to stand before a holy God, no matter how much we might wish we could be. It does us no good to argue with the Law because it's just arguing with God. But when we turn to him, we find that Jesus already loves us more than we can imagine.

Look up the video "Falling Plates" on YouTube.

Jesus paid the price for our sin, and that's why we need the Law - to show us the reason Jesus had to die. Without the Law, we might wonder why God would allow such a thing to happen. But when we see that someone has to die, then we see how much Jesus loves us. He was willing to die instead of us.

But Jesus also gives us something through his death - his own righteousness. In the next lesson we'll see how Jesus kept the whole Law for us.

Jesus Tempted

Jesus kept the whole Law for us. To do so, he had to be a human being, just like we are. And like every human being, he was tempted.

Read Matthew 4:1-11 for the story of Jesus' temptation in the wilderness.

We are shown just three temptations here, but these three temptations echo the kinds of sins we are tempted toward all the time.

- The temptation to turn the stones into bread = the temptation to give in to our body's needs and desires
- The temptation to jump from the cliff = the temptation to take God for granted and put ourselves at risk
- The temptation to bow to Satan = the temptation to take charge of our own lives and do what we want, rather than God's will

In each of these temptations, what did Jesus use as his tool for rejecting the devil?

Family Discussion: How does Jesus' temptation help us be more thankful for the work he did for us?

Our Great High Priest

For God's Old Testament people of Israel, the Priests were the religious leaders who made sacrifices for the people. Over and over again they took animals and put them on altars, killed and burned them, as an atonement for the sins of the people. But in the New Testament, we read about the importance of that ritual: Those animals could not save. Only the blood of the Spotless Lamb, Jesus Christ, saves. And so, Jesus sacrificed himself.

The book of Hebrews is a sermon by an unknown author that was circulated during the time of the apostles and was considered Scripture by the earliest Christians. That sermon centers on the theme of Jesus as the Great High Priest.

As a family, read Hebrews 10:1-14. How does the author connect the Old Testament priests to Jesus? What did the Old Testament priests do? What does Jesus do?

You can read the rest of the book of Hebrews on your own; we would encourage you to do so as a family! It is a fascinating text full of truth about who Jesus is and what he has done for us.

For now, consider the following verses:

- **Galatians 4:4-5** - But when the set time had fully come, God sent his Son, born of a woman, born under the law, to redeem those under the law, that we might receive adoption to sonship.
- **Hebrews 2:18** - Because he himself suffered when he was tempted, he is able to help those who are being tempted.
- **Hebrews 4:14-16** - Therefore, since we have a great high priest who has ascended into heaven, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold firmly to the faith we profess. For we do not have a high priest who is unable to empathize with our weaknesses, but we have one who has been tempted in every way, just as we are—yet he did not sin. Let us then approach God's throne of grace with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need.

Jesus puts himself under the Law, allows himself to be tempted, and yet resists all temptation and sin. He does this for us, so that he can give us his righteousness.

Family Discussion: How could you remember this truth the next time you are tempted? How might it help you resist temptation?

God's Great Exchange

When Jesus died on the cross, he made an exchange with us. He took something from us and gave us something in its place. Years ago, a pastor created the following explanation for what that means. Take a look:

WE HAVE A PROBLEM

**THE WAY WE OUGHT TO BE -
WHAT GOD REQUIRES!**



$$\begin{array}{r} +\text{Holiness} \\ -\text{Sin} \\ \hline =\text{Life} \end{array}$$

"Be holy because I, the Lord your God, am holy." (Leviticus 19:2)

"Do this (love God and your neighbor perfectly) and you will live." (Luke 10:28)

THE WAY WE ARE - WHAT GOD SEES IN US!



$$\begin{array}{r} -\text{Holiness} \\ +\text{Sin} \\ \hline =\text{Death} \end{array}$$

"All have sinned and fall short of the glory of God." (Romans 3:23)

"Your iniquities have separated you from your God." (Isaiah 59:2)

"The wages of sin is death." (Romans 6:23)

MAN-MADE REMEDIES FOR OUR PROBLEM

"I'll do more good deeds than bad ones."





"I'll try harder."

"I'll compare myself to others."



"There is a way that seems right to a man, but in the end it leads to death." (Proverbs 16:25)

"Whoever keeps the whole law and yet stumbles at just one point is guilty of breaking all of it." (James 2:10)

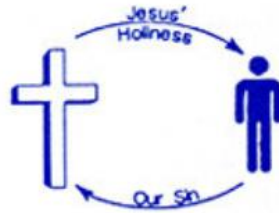
GOD'S SOLUTION - THE GREAT EXCHANGE

JESUS

"A lamb without blemish or defect"
(1 Peter 1:19)

"The true God and eternal life"
(1 John 5:20)

"The Lord our Righteousness" (Jeremiah 23:6)



**FORGIVENESS
LIFE**

"Look, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!" (John 1:29)

"The Lord has laid on him the iniquity of us all." (Isaiah 53:6)

"God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God."
(2 Corinthians 5:21)

GOD'S GIFT - ETERNAL LIFE

BY GRACE

"He saved us, not because of righteous things we had done, but because of his mercy." (Titus 3:5)

"The wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord." (Romans 6:23)

THROUGH FAITH

"Whoever believes in the Son has eternal life but whoever rejects the Son will not see life, for God's wrath remains on him."
(John 3:36)

"By grace you have been saved through faith - and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God." (Ephesians 2:8)

VIA HIS WORD

"Faith comes from hearing the message ... through the word of Christ."
(Romans 10:17)

"The gospel ... is the power of God for the salvation of everyone who believes."
(Romans 1:16)



GOD'S BLESSINGS - NEW LIFE



"I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full." (John 10:10)

"We are God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works." (Ephesians 2:10)

"You are no longer ... aliens, but ... members of God's household." (Ephesians 2:19)

"Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest." (Matthew 11:28)

"The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control." (Galatians 5:22-3)

"Call upon me in the day of trouble; I will deliver you." (Psalm 50:15)

NOTE: GOOD WORKS DO NOT PRODUCE CHRISTIANS, BUT CHRISTIANS PRODUCE GOOD WORKS.

Great Exchange Practice

You just had a chance to learn a bit about God's Great Exchange. This is actually a fantastic tool for sharing the Gospel with others. If you could get that down, you would be able to share Jesus with just about anyone. It isn't actually too hard. If you can draw stick people, you can explain God's Great Exchange.

Go back and review the last few pages. Review it as many times as you need to so that you feel confident about how to explain it.

Have everyone in your family practice presenting God's Great Exchange to everyone else. Help each other out as you need to.

Jesus Keeps the Law wrap up

Now that we've seen how Jesus keeps the Law for us, we can be confident that God accepts us, not because of what we have done, but because of what Christ has done. That is good news! So how do we respond to that good news?

Sanctification

Since Jesus has kept the whole Law for us, and has taken away our sins, and has given us his righteousness... what now? This is where the Law serves in another way: as a guide for our lives of Sanctification.

As a family, read Psalm 51.

David wrote this psalm after he had come to repentance for his sin with Bathsheba and the murder of Uriah. He wanted to express not just his sorrow and repentance over his sin, but also his understanding of God's forgiveness and his desire to live a new and holy life. Here's a breakdown of how this psalm is structured:

- Verses 1-2: David begins by asking for forgiveness
- Verses 3-6: David acknowledges that he is sinful and needs forgiveness
- Verses 7-9: David asks again for forgiveness, this time in confidence that God will give it
- Verses 10-12: David asks for his heart to be healed and renewed in faith
- Verses 13-17: David expresses his desire to live a life of worship and service to God
- Verses 18-19: David anticipates a good outcome for the nation as a result of his repentance and service

Now, go back and read through the Psalm looking for those themes and ideas.

Family Activity: Could you use this psalm as a model for your prayers of repentance? Write out a prayer of repentance using the basic structure of Psalm 51 as a guide. You could also borrow words and phrases from the psalm.

When David asks for a clean heart, he is asking to be "Sanctified." **To be Sanctified means "to be set apart for God's purpose."**

This means both learning how to say "no" to sin

AND...

Learning how to say "yes" to the things God asks us to do.

Let's take a look at a story about Sanctification, where a man repents of his sin, embraces God's forgiveness, and makes a change to his life to do God's will.

As a family, read Luke 19:1-10.

- First, talk about the details of the story. Who is Zacchaeus, and how is he described? What does he do, and how does he meet Jesus? How does he respond to Jesus?
- Second, talk about why Zacchaeus did what he did. Why did he climb in the tree? Why did he make a change to his life?
- Third, talk about how Zacchaeus shows us what happens when God works in someone's life.
- Fourth, talk about how Zacchaeus shows us what Sanctification looks like. How did Zacchaeus's life change as a result of knowing Jesus?

The Same Attitude as Christ Jesus

Our growth in Sanctification does not start with us. It starts with Jesus. Through his Gospel, he gives us faith and a love for him, and he sends his Holy Spirit into our hearts. And then he shows us how to have the right attitude for serving him.

Your attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus: Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be grasped, but made himself nothing, taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness. And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself and became obedient to death — even death on a cross!

- Philippians 2:5-8 -

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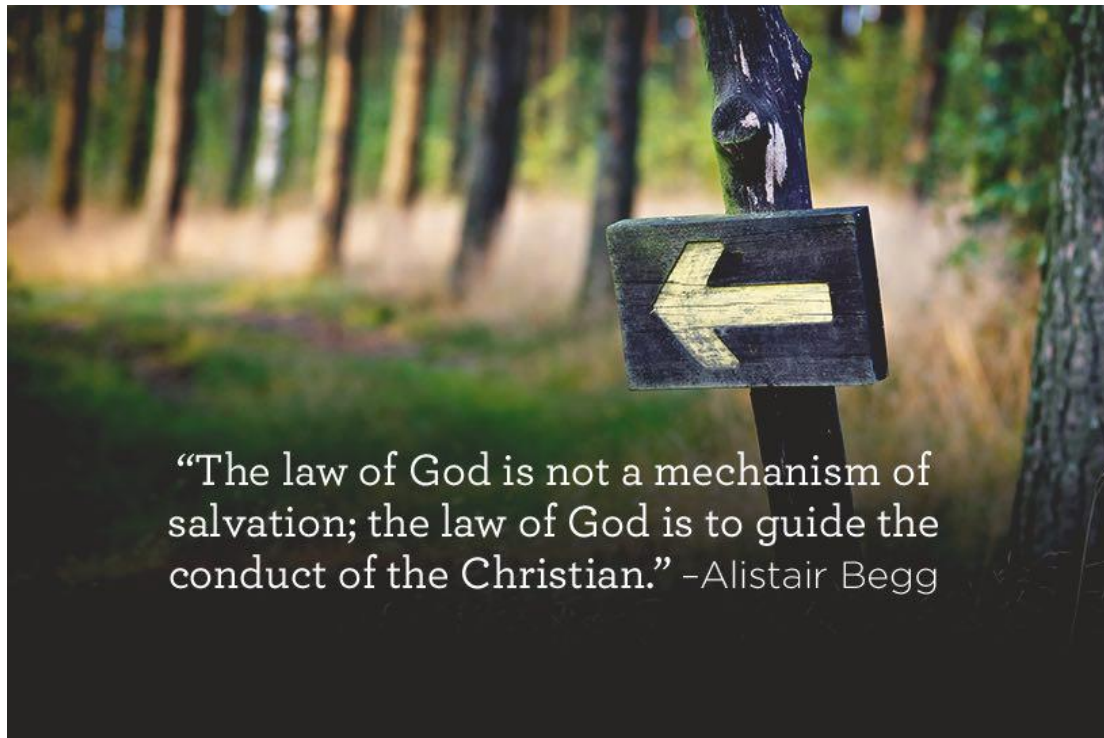


As a family, read Philippians 2:1-11, then discuss the following questions:

- Summarize what Paul is saying in verses 1-2.
- You could sum up verses 3-4 with a single word: "Serve." How would service to others lead to Paul (or any other believer) having joy?
- According to verse 6, what makes Jesus unique among all other human beings?
- Jesus was willing to humble himself and set aside the use of his divine glory and power to save us. What are we to do in response, according to verse 5?
- We may not be God, as Jesus is, but we can still have an attitude of service. Give some specific examples of how you could serve others the way Jesus served you.

The Law as a Guide

As we try to have the same attitude as Jesus and ask the Holy Spirit to help us respond in faith to him, we can use the Law in a way that only Christians can: as a guide. Anyone who does not know Jesus can only find condemnation in the Law; it won't save them. But through faith in Jesus, set free from our sins, given a new spirit, we can please God. The Law shows us how.



“The law of God is not a mechanism of salvation; the law of God is to guide the conduct of the Christian.” –Alistair Begg

Since the Law tells me “Do,” as a believer, I can say, “Okay, God! I will!” The commandments help me understand God's will for me. Here are just a few examples of how that works:

- The Third Commandment tells me to set aside time to study God's Word, so in faith I will find time each day to be in the Word, and as a family we will prioritize worshiping and hearing God's Word at church.
- The Fifth Commandment tells me to love and protect life, so in faith I will avoid doing things that are harmful to others and will actively try to protect and help people in need.
- The Eighth Commandment tells me to be honest, truthful, and maintain the reputation of others, so in faith I will avoid telling lies, avoid gossip, and will speak well of people and build others up.

As a family, look again at the commandments in Exodus 20. Have each person in the family choose 2 that they feel they need to work on. Have them explain why they chose those two.

A Plan of Action

Make sure each family member had two commandments that they are going to work on following more closely. Now let's make a plan of action.

Come up with a plan that will help you say "no" to sin and "yes" to God in that particular area of your life this week. Here are some suggested activities:

- **Handwrite out the commandment and its explanation and keep it somewhere you'll see it a few times a day.**
- **Write a prayer about it, asking God to give you strength to do his will.**
- **Keep a journal and write out at the end of the day how it went, being sure to specifically talk about what you're working on.**
- **Talk about your plan each evening during family devotion and discuss how you can help each other.**

You might use some or all these suggestions, and you might add your own ideas too.

Have everyone in the family write their plan on a sheet of paper. Take a picture of your family together holding your plans and upload it to complete this assignment.

VERY IMPORTANT NOTE:

This activity is intended to help you practice in growing in your Sanctification, but **it will only work if you are spending time in the Word and being reminded of God's forgiveness and grace.** This activity does not make you more acceptable to God - only Jesus does that! But it is a way to say "thank you" to him when you spend time practicing doing his will.

Conclusion to Ten Commandments

In his conclusion to the Commandments, Luther writes this:

What does God say about all these commandments?

He says, "I, the Lord your God, am a jealous God, punishing the children for the sin of the fathers to the third and fourth generation of those who hate me, but showing love to a thousand generations of those who love me and keep my commandments."

What does this mean?

God threatens to punish all who transgress these commandments. Therefore, we should fear his anger and not disobey what he commands. But he promises grace and every blessing to all who keep these commandments. Therefore, we should love and trust him and gladly obey what he commands.

Here's the thing to remember:

Jesus kept the Commandments for you. He died to take away your sin, and gave you his righteousness.

But we still want to keep God's commands! We do so because we love him, we trust him, and we are thankful for all he has done.

Family Activity: How are you doing memorizing the commandments? Help each other finish memorizing all of them, then reward each other for finishing. Continue to encourage each other to remember them by once in a while quizzing each other (and kids can quiz their parents!).

Congratulations! You have finished the course on the Commandments. Now go, set free by Jesus to do God's will!