



The Law of God

“Great peace have they which love thy law: and nothing shall offend them” (Psalms 119:165).

The receptionist said over the phone, “Tell Louise that the dentist is ready to repair her false teeth. She can come right away.”

A little later a young girl came into the dentist’s office and handed over to the receptionist a set of false teeth.

“Where’s Louise?” asked the receptionist.

“She won’t come. Said to tell the dentist to fix them.”

“But he can’t make them fit if she isn’t here to make an accurate impression. Without her, the dentures will not make a perfect fit, and she won’t be comfortable.”

“Can’t make her come. She doesn’t like dentists. Just fix it as best.”

The receptionist handed the false teeth back to the girl. “Tell Louise it is impossible to help her unless she comes to see the dentist.”

How many of us are like Louise? We’re uncomfortable, miserable, can’t function properly, but we refuse to come for help. We don’t want to look into the mirror of God’s law and have our sins pointed out. We want a quick fix on our terms. But sin is still sin. No matter what we think, God can’t fix our sin problem unless we choose to allow Him to take care of our sins, and forgive us.

Preview

Have you ever wondered why all but two of the Ten Commandments are stated in the negative? Has Satan tempted you to think that God’s laws are a list of do’s and don’ts, with mostly don’ts?

In physics, students learn about absolute zero—the lowest theoretical temperature that gas can reach. At absolute zero (-459.67 degrees Fahrenheit) gas molecules would be absolutely at rest. Actually, all gases turn to liquid before they get to absolute zero.

But as yet, scientists have found no limit to how hot something can be. Higher and higher temperatures are constantly being attained. The minimum has been set, but the maximum has not been reached.

Physics helps us understand why God spoke His law stating in it negatives—the minimum. He said, “Don’t go any lower than killing, stealing, and lying, but there is no ultimate limit to kindness, courtesy, tact, generosity, and helpfulness that you can show to others. My law is only the first rung of the ladder. You set the maximum. I have set no limits on love.”

Points to Ponder

God has given a standard whereby His children can reach the maximum goal of love. He promises, “If you love Me, I will help you enjoy the best in life with no regrets. Your life will be filled with joy that never goes away. Each day will be better than the one before, and following my plan always brings success and blessings.”

Think of each commandment and how it might be rendered in positive terms.

1. "Thou shalt have no other gods before me" (Exodus 20:3).
Positive: "I made you and I know your need. I desire a close relationship with you every moment. But if you try to be your own god or put someone or something between us, our love relationship will be broken. When you put me first in your life, I'll abide in you. I will give you lasting joy and all that you need for genuine happiness, both now and for eternity."
2. Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image... Thou shalt not bow down thyself to them, nor serve them..." (Exodus 20:4, 5).
Positive: "I cannot be limited to the material. You cannot make anything that resembles Me. You will only foul up your worship of Me if you try. It is I who will transform you into My divine image. It's impossible for you to make anything in the likeness of your Creator."
3. "Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain" (Exodus 20:7).
Positive: "You are a member of the family of God. What a privilege you have to keep the family name pure and noble. Both in public and in private, you will want to exalt your family name in word and deed."
4. "Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy" (Exodus 20:8-11).
Positive: "I love you so much I long to be with you. In order that you may enjoy good health, a balanced life, and a time for worship and fellowship, I've made the needed provision. I've given you six days a week to work. But on the seventh day I want you to rest. Keep that holy—a day of worship and fellowship with me."
5. "Honor thy father and thy mother: that thy days may be long upon the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee" (Exodus 20:12).
Positive: "I have given you the family. It is the most satisfying and enjoyable human relationship. As children, you have a duty to honor and obey your parents. When you do this, you'll experience joy and happiness in your life."
6. "Thou shalt not kill" (Exodus 20:13).
Positive: "Life is precious. You enjoy life when you respect it both within you and with others. You shall enjoy relationships that promote life. You will never know the misery and ruin of hate, anger, and revenge, for peace will be in your heart."
7. "Thou shalt not commit adultery" (Exodus 20:14).
Positive: "I've created marriage as a blessing to man and woman. Marriage provides the sweetest of all human relationships. Enjoy it, based on trust, purity, and faithfulness."
8. "Thou shalt not steal" (Exodus 20:15).
Positive: "Be honest in all your relationships with Me and your fellow beings. Regard the possessions and the reputation of others as sacred as you would your own."
9. "Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbor" (Exodus 20:16).
Positive: "A relationship of love will lead you to tell the truth always. True love has no room for slander, gossip, and false stories. It promotes trust and happiness."

10. "Thou shalt not covet..." (Exodus 20:17).

Positive: "Be content with what you have. Enjoy the pleasures of unselfish giving, which will free you from selfishness, envy, jealousy, and hoarding."

Nuts & Bolts

God's law reflects His character. You can know what God is like by studying His law. It shows us how to relate to our Creator and Redeemer, and it also defines our duty to our fellow beings. Thus, it is referred to as the moral law, the law of Love, and the law of freedom. The Bible uses many other words that help us understand and love God's law.

1. Look up the texts below, and from each, locate a description that helps you love and honor God's law. Write the applicable words.

a. Psalm 19:7, 8 _____

b. Romans 7:12 _____

c. Psalm 119:97; 37:4 _____

d. Romans 7:14 _____

e. Psalm 119:151 _____

f. 1 John 5:3 _____

g. Psalm 119:127 _____

h. Psalm 119:96 _____

i. Psalm 119:172 _____

j. Luke 10:27 _____

God's law has many blessings for us. But there's one thing the law cannot do—it cannot save us from sin. The law points out our sins and leads us to Christ, who alone can save us.

2. How can I know what sin is?

1 John 3:4: _____

3. The law is compared to a mirror. As such, what does it do?

James 1:23-25: _____

4. What standard will we face in the judgment?

James 2:12: "So speak ye, and do so as they that shall be _____ by the law of _____."

5. Some believe that Jesus abolished the law and that it's no longer in effect. Is that true?

If the law is abolished, then we will have no sin (Romans 4:15), and if we have no sin, why would we need Jesus the Saviour?

Jesus said: "Think not that I am come to _____ the law, or the prophets: I am _____ come to _____ but to fulfill." (Matthew 5:17)

6. Some say, "You don't have to keep the commandments. All you need to do is love God and have faith." Is this sufficient?

1 John 5:3: "For this is the _____ of God, that we _____ his commandments. And his commandments are not _____."

Romans 3:31: "Do we then make _____ the law through faith? God forbid: yea, we _____ the law."

John 14:14: "If ye _____ me, keep my _____."

7. On what basis is salvation made possible to us?

Ephesians 2:8: "For by _____ are ye saved through _____; and that not of _____; it is the _____ of _____."

Romans 6:23: "The wages of sin is _____; but the _____ of God is _____ life through _____ our Lord."

Acts 16:31: " _____ on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be _____, and thy house."

8. What does John 3:16 say to you personally? _____
_____.

9. What is the relationship between love and obedience?

John 14:15: "If ye _____ me, keep my commandments."

John 15:10: If ye _____ my commandments, ye shall _____ in my _____."

When you come to Jesus and accept His forgiveness, you would want to show His love for Him. This love is seen in your life of obedience to His law.

10. Give two reasons for why you know God's law existed from eternity, long before Sinai.

a. Compare 2 Peter 2:4 and Revelation 12:9

b. Genesis 26:5: "Abraham _____ my voice and kept my _____, my _____, my _____ and my _____."

Words to Remember

Unique law: The Ten Commandment law is unique in that it has its origin in the character of God Himself.
He spoke the law. He wrote it with His own hand.

Perpetual law: The Ten Commandments are unchangeable and eternal.

The Difference Between

Moral and ceremonial law: The moral law reflects God's character and is the standard for human life and character. These are given in the Ten Commandments. The ceremonial laws are rules and regulations during the Old Testament times pertaining to sacrifices and ceremonies a sinner had to carry out in order to obtain forgiveness from sin. The moral law is eternal. The ceremonial law ceased to operate once Jesus offered Himself as the sacrifice for the sins of the world on the cross.

Law and the gospel: The law points out sin, showing us we are sinners separated from God. The law leads us to conversion as we sense our need of a Saviour. The gospel is the good news of salvation through Jesus Christ.

I Truly Believe

The Bible tells us that throughout the ages Satan's attacks have always been against God's Law. That war will reach its climax just before Christ's second coming. The final test will center on whether we will choose to obey God's law or not. Since the law and the gospel cannot be separated, the final decision will be between those who "keep the commandments of God and have the testimony of Jesus" and those who refuse to obey.

Place a check in the box if it expresses your conviction.

- I love God's law and am willing to obey it, whatever it may cost me.
- My motive for obedience is love for God. I know I cannot be saved by the keeping of the law.
- My obedience is based on love for Jesus.

My Prayer

Dear Father,

I thank You that Christ came not only to redeem me but to help me understand the authority and holiness of the Law of God. I ask for the Holy Spirit to enable me to depend on the grace of God for power to do His will through the motive of love. Amen.