

Deuteronomy 5:1-6, 22-23
 The Ten Commandments
 TC1001

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“THE TEN COMMANDMENTS”

(Introduction)

INTRODUCTION: There is something known as *The Three Formulae* in historic Christianity...

1. *The Three Formulae* (plural for *formula*)
 - a. *The Apostles' Creed* (doctrine)
 - b. *The Lord's Prayer* (piety)
 - c. *The Ten Commandments* (ethics)
 - d. And a section on Baptism (sacraments)
2. In fact, most historic Catholic and Protestant Catechisms are organized around the *Three Formulae*
 - a. *Catechism of the Catholic Church* (1994)
 - b. *Luther's Small Catechism* (1529)
 - c. *Westminster Shorter Catechism* (1647)
 - i. Questions 1-38 – *Doctrine (Creed)*
 - ii. Questions 39-87 – *Ten Commandments*
 - iii. Questions 88-98 – *Means of Grace/Sacraments*
 - iv. Questions 99-107 – *The Lord's Prayer*
3. **James I. Packer:** *Growing In Christ* (Crossway; 1994)
 - a. Originally titled: *I Want to be a Christian: A Book of Instruction for Christians and Would-be Christians*. (Kingsway Publications; 1977 and InterVarsity Press; 1988)
 - b. Packer makes these astute comments... (pp. xii-xiii)

Christianity is not instinctive to anyone, nor is it picked up casually without effort. It is a faith that has to be learned, and therefore taught, and so some sort of systematic instruction (catechumenate) is an essential part of a church's life. In the first Christian centuries there was a steady stream of adult converts and enquirers, and catechetical instruction took the form of lectures, given at their level. The Reformers' strategy for revitalizing a Christendom that was ignorant of Christianity led them, however, to concentrate on systematic instruction for children. During a century and a half following Luther's pioneer Little Catechism of 1529, literally hundreds of catechisms were produced, mostly though not exclusively for the young. Some of these were official church documents, others the private compositions of individual clergymen. The English Prayer Book catechism, the Heidelberg Catechism, and the Westminster Shorter Catechism are among the best known. One great need today is a renewal of systematic Christian instruction—catechetical teaching—for adults. It need not be called that, nor need it take the form of rigid drilling in preset formulae, which is how old-time Protestants taught their children;

but somehow or other, opportunities must be given for folk in and just outside the churches to examine Christian essentials, because there are so many for whom this is a prime need.

4. Part of our *Christian Catechesis* (instruction) is the Moral Law of God:

- a. **The Ten Commandments** (*Decalogue*)
- b. Two places; two versions...
 - i. *Exodus 20:1-17* (first law)
 - ii. *Deuteronomy 5:6-21* (second law)
 - iii. *dueteros* (second) *nomos* (law) = *Deuteronomy*
- c. God's Blueprint of Human Life
- d. *Torah*: the good instruction given by parents to children
 - i. *Hear, my son, your father's instruction, and forsake not your mother's teaching, for they are a graceful garland for your head and pendants for your neck. (Prov. 1:8-9)*
 - ii. *My son, keep your father's commandment, and forsake not your mother's teaching. Bind them on your heart always; tie them around your neck. When you walk, they will lead you; when you lie down, they will watch over you; and when you awake, they will talk with you. For the commandment is a lamp and the teaching a light, and the reproofs of discipline are the way of life... (Proverbs 6:20-23)*
 - iii. *Torah* (law) and *musar* (instruction)
- e. **James I. Packer**: *Growing In Christ*; p. 224-225

It cannot be too much stressed that Old Testament moral teaching (as distinct from the Old Testament revelation of grace) is not inferior to that of the New Testament, let alone the conventional standards of our time. The barbarities of lawless sex, violence, and exploitation, cutthroat business methods, class warfare, disregard for one's family, and the like are sanctioned only by our modern secular society. The supposedly primitive Old Testament, and the 3000-year-old Commandments in particular, are bulwarks against all these things.

5. Does living under the Gospel negate our duty to keep the Law? **By no means!** We learned this truth in our morning sermon today...

- a. *Do not think that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I have not come to abolish them but to fulfill them. For truly, I say to you, until heaven and earth pass away, not an iota, not a dot, will pass from the Law until all is accomplished. Therefore whoever relaxes one of the least of these commandments and teaches others to do the same will be called least in the kingdom of heaven, but whoever does them and teaches them will be called great in the kingdom*

of heaven. For I tell you, unless your righteousness exceeds that of the scribes and Pharisees, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven. (Matthew 5:17-20)

- b. Grace is not **license** to break the law (sin).

What shall we say then? Are we to continue in sin that grace may abound? By no means! How can we who died to sin still live in it? Do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? We were buried therefore with him by baptism into death, in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might walk in newness of life. (Romans 6:1-4)

- c. Grace is the **power** to keep the Law and the **freedom** not to sin.

For freedom Christ has set us free; stand firm therefore, and do not submit again to a yoke of slavery.

For you were called to freedom, brothers. Only do not use your freedom as an opportunity for the flesh, but through love serve one another.

For the whole law is fulfilled in one word: "You shall love your neighbor as yourself." (Galatians 5:1, 13, 14)

- d. **Michael Horton:** *The Law of Perfect Freedom*

6. This evening I want to introduce you to the **Ten Commandments:** Deuteronomy 5:1-33

- a. What They Are
- b. What They Reveal
- c. What They Teach

7. Three sets of three observations to introduce the Law...

I. THE THREE TYPES OF LAW (Deuteronomy 5:1-5)

And Moses summoned all Israel and said to them, “Hear, O Israel, the statutes and the rules that I speak in your hearing today, and you shall learn them and be careful to do them. The Lord our God made a covenant with us in Horeb. Not with our fathers did the Lord make this covenant, but with us, who are all of us here alive today. The Lord spoke with you face to face at the mountain, out of the midst of the fire, while I stood between the Lord and you at that time, to declare to you the word of the Lord. For you were afraid because of the fire, and you did not go up into the mountain. (Deuteronomy 5:1-5)

A. The Moral Law

1. God refers to the “*statutes and rules*” that He made with Israel as a facet of His *Covenant of Grace* He gave to Israel (and to us).

And Moses summoned all Israel and said to them, “Hear, O Israel, the statutes and the rules that I speak in your hearing today, and you shall learn them and be careful to do them. The Lord our God made a covenant with us in Horeb. Not with our fathers did the Lord make this covenant, but with us, who are all of us here alive today. The Lord spoke with you face to face at the mountain, out of the midst of the fire, while I stood between the Lord and you at that time, to declare to you the word of the Lord. For you were afraid because of the fire, and you did not go up into the mountain. (Deuteronomy 5:1-5)

The Lord said to Moses, “Cut for yourself two tablets of stone like the first, and I will write on the tablets the words that were on the first tablets, which you broke. Be ready by the morning, and come up in the morning to Mount Sinai, and present yourself there to me on the top of the mountain. No one shall come up with you, and let no one be seen throughout all the mountain. Let no flocks or herds graze opposite that mountain.” So Moses cut two tablets of stone like the first. And he rose early in the morning and went up on Mount Sinai, as the Lord had commanded him, and took in his hand two tablets of stone. The Lord descended in the cloud and stood with him there, and proclaimed the name of the Lord. The Lord passed before him and proclaimed, “The Lord, the Lord, a God merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love and faithfulness, keeping steadfast love for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin, but who will by no means clear the guilty, visiting the iniquity of the fathers on the children and the children's children, to the third and the fourth generation.” And Moses quickly bowed his head toward the earth and worshiped. And he said, “If now I have found favor in your sight, O Lord, please let the Lord go in the midst of us, for it is a stiff-necked people, and pardon our iniquity and our sin, and take us for your inheritance.”

And he said, “Behold, I am making a covenant. Before all your people I will do marvels, such as have not been created in all the earth or in any nation. And all the people among whom you are shall see the work of the Lord, for it is an awesome thing that I will do with you. (Exodus 34:1-10)

2. As in every facet of the *Covenant of Grace*, God attached a **sign of the covenant** to remind His people of their assurance and blessings of faith in God's promise (Gospel).
 - a. **Noah:** *Covenant of Preservation (rainbow)*
 - b. **Abraham:** *Covenant of Promise (circumcision)*
 - c. **Moses:** *Covenant of Law (Sabbath)*

And the LORD said to Moses, “You are to speak to the people of Israel and say, ‘Above all you shall keep my Sabbaths, for this is a sign between me and you throughout your generations, that you may know that I, the LORD, sanctify you. You shall keep the Sabbath, because it is holy for you. Everyone who profanes it shall be put to death. Whoever does any work on it, that soul shall be cut off from among his people. Six days shall work be done, but the seventh day is a Sabbath of solemn rest, holy to the Lord. Whoever does any work on the Sabbath day shall be put to death. Therefore the people of Israel shall keep the Sabbath, observing the Sabbath throughout their generations, as a covenant forever. It is a sign forever between me and the people of Israel that in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, and on the seventh day he rested and was refreshed.’”

And he gave to Moses, when he had finished speaking with him on Mount Sinai, the two tablets of the testimony, tablets of stone, written with the finger of God. (Exodus 31:12-18)

d. **David:** Covenant of the Kingdom (*Throne of David*)

e. **Jeremiah:** New Covenant (*indwelling Holy Spirit*)

i. *“Behold, the days are coming, declares the Lord, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and the house of Judah, not like the covenant that I made with their fathers on the day when I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt, my covenant that they broke, though I was their husband, declares the Lord. But this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, declares the Lord: I will put my law within them, and I will write it on their hearts. And I will be their God, and they shall be my people. And no longer shall each one teach his neighbor and each his brother, saying, ‘Know the Lord,’ for they shall all know me, from the least of them to the greatest, declares the Lord. For I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more.” (Jeremiah 31:31-34)*

ii. Pentecost: *The Spirit within each believer*

iii. The Sacraments of the New Testament church

iv. *A sacrament is a holy regulation established by Christ, in which Christ and the benefits of the new covenant are represented, sealed, and applied to believers by physical signs. (Westminster Shorter Catechism #92)*

The sacraments of the New Testament are baptism and the Lord's Supper. (Westminster Shorter Catechism #93)

v. **Baptism:** *The New Circumcision*

In him also you were circumcised with a circumcision made without hands, by putting off the body of the flesh, by the circumcision of Christ, having been buried with him in baptism, in which you were also raised with him through faith in the powerful working of God, who raised him from the dead. (Colossians 2:11-12)

vi. **Lord's Supper:** *The New Passover Meal*

Your boasting is not good. Do you not know that a little leaven leavens the whole lump? Cleanse out the old leaven that you may be a new lump, as you really are unleavened. For Christ, our Passover lamb, has been sacrificed. (1 Corinthians 5:6-7)

vii. **Westminster Confession of Faith:** *“signs and seals of the covenant of grace”*

3. At the heart of God’s Covenant of Law lies **the moral law** as summarized in the **Ten Commandments**.

“I am the LORD your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery.

“You shall have no other gods before me.

“You shall not make for yourself a carved image, or any likeness of anything that is in heaven above, or that is on the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth. You shall not bow down to them or serve them; for I the LORD your God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers on the children to the third and fourth generation of those who hate me, but showing steadfast love to thousands of those who love me and keep my commandments.

“You shall not take the name of the LORD your God in vain, for the LORD will not hold him guiltless who takes his name in vain.

“Observe the Sabbath day, to keep it holy, as the LORD your God commanded you. Six days you shall labor and do all your work, but the seventh day is a Sabbath to the LORD your God. On it you shall not do any work, you or your son or your daughter or your male servant or your female servant, or your ox or your donkey or any of your livestock, or the sojourner who is within your gates, that your male servant and your female servant may rest as well as you. You shall remember that you were a slave in the land of Egypt, and the LORD your God brought you out from there with a mighty hand and an outstretched arm. Therefore the LORD your God commanded you to keep the Sabbath day.

“Honor your father and your mother, as the LORD your God commanded you, that your days may be long, and that it may go well with you in the land that the LORD your God is giving you.

“You shall not murder.

“And you shall not commit adultery.

“And you shall not steal.

“And you shall not bear false witness against your neighbor.

“And you shall not covet your neighbor's wife. And you shall not desire your neighbor's house, his field, or his male servant, or his female servant, his ox, or his donkey, or anything that is your neighbor's.” (Deuteronomy 5:6-21)

4. The moral law that binds all mankind, and every person, to a life of moral obedience to God
- a. Written on the heart (*conscience*) of each person

- b. *For when Gentiles, who do not have the law, by nature do what the law requires, they are a law to themselves, even though they do not have the law. They show that the work of the law is written on their hearts, while their conscience also bears witness, and their conflicting thoughts accuse or even excuse them on that day when, according to my gospel, God judges the secrets of men by Christ Jesus. (Romans 2:14-16)*
 - c. *Noted fact: Anthropologists have never discovered a people, regardless of how "primitive," who did not instinctively know the moral law and socially reinforce it in some manner or another.*
5. The moral law of God continues to define right and wrong, inform the human conscience, and bind all men unto holiness and obedience.
 6. **Proof:** *Every pagan, atheist and humanist proclaims in self-righteousness, "I try to keep the Ten Commandments."*

B. The Ceremonial Law

1. Part of the Mosaic Law was the *ceremonial laws* encased in Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers and Deuteronomy.
 - a. *Sacrificial regulations*
 - b. *Festivals/Holy day statutes*
 - c. *Ceremonial cleansing rituals*
 - d. *Religious rules to guard worship*
 - e. *Special diets to protect and preserve Israel*
2. These ceremonial laws all pointed to **Jesus Christ**
 - a. They were *types* pointing to Christ (e.g. *scapegoat*).
 - b. They were foreshadowings of Christ's atonement (e.g., *Yom Kippur*).
 - c. They *illustrated* what Jesus would do for sinners who believed in Him (e.g., *cleanse and sanctify*).
 - d. They were intended to *set aside* a chosen (elect) people who belonged to God in true worship and holiness.
 - e. *For the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation for all people, training us to renounce ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright, and godly lives in the present age, waiting for our blessed hope, the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ, who gave himself for us to redeem us from all lawlessness and to purify for himself a people for his own possession who are zealous for good works. (Titus 2:11-14)*
3. With the arrival of Christ and His finished work on the Cross, all these ceremonial laws were **abrogated**.
 - a. i.e., they were done away with as extinct, unnecessary, and fulfilled
 - b. The message of *The Epistle to the Hebrews*

- c. The clear teaching of Peter, Paul and the Apostles
 - d. *Besides this law, commonly called moral, God was pleased to give to the people of Israel, as a church under age, ceremonial laws, containing several typical ordinances, partly of worship, prefiguring Christ, His graces, actions, sufferings, and benefits; and partly, holding forth divers instructions of moral duties. All which ceremonial laws are now abrogated, under the New Testament.* (Westminster Confession of Faith 19-3)
4. These religious practices are now **contrary** to the Gospel:
- Look: I, Paul, say to you that if you accept circumcision, Christ will be of no advantage to you. I testify again to every man who accepts circumcision that he is obligated to keep the whole law. You are severed from Christ, you who would be justified by the law; you have fallen away from grace. For through the Spirit, by faith, we ourselves eagerly wait for the hope of righteousness. For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision nor uncircumcision counts for anything, but only faith working through love.* (Galatians 5:2-6)
- Therefore let no one pass judgment on you in questions of food and drink, or with regard to a festival or a new moon or a Sabbath. These are a shadow of the things to come, but the substance belongs to Christ.* (Colossians 2:16-17)
5. **Please Note:** I have received a number of e-mail inquiries in the last few months, from people in and outside of our Church, about a growing movement of Christians returning to the practice of Old Testament Mosaic worship practices and holy days.
- a. A return to Old Testament ceremonial law contrary to the gospel
 - b. An attempt to go back in law rather than go forward in grace and faith
 - c. The *Judaizers heresy* revisited: You must become Jewish in addition to becoming Christian
 - d. Extreme Dispensationalism and the *Restoration of Israel*
6. **Cathy Hargett:** *Highway to Zion Ministries* (Pineville, North Carolina)
- As we continue to celebrate the feasts of the Lord with their fulfillment in our Messiah, we grow deeper in love with Him! To celebrate the feasts of the Lord with their fulfillment in Yeshua ha Mashiach is to experience truly living His Word, truly being in His Word. Any believer who desires to take the plunge out of mainstream Gentile cultural understanding into identification with our Jewish Messiah and the deeps of how the Lion of Judah has fulfilled the Spring Feasts and how He will most definitely fulfill the Fall Feasts at His re-appearing will come away profoundly changed.*
7. **No.** The ways of eating, dressing, worshiping, celebrating and cleansing like Jews are *over*. God's plan for the world is His Gentile Church.
- a. Which Jews may/will join
 - b. The New Testament church not Old Testament Israel
 - c. The Savior's name is *Jesus Christ* (NT) and not *Yeshua ha Mashiach*.
 - d. We're not going back to Jerusalem but forward to the City of God!

8. **Don't get into this weirdness; it's just another distraction from unschooled people and the enemy to keep us from focusing on the Gospel Mission.**

C. The Civil Law

1. The third element of the Mosaic Law was the *civil law*: The legal statutes and punishments for violating God's law in the social arena. For example...
 - a. Stoning homosexuals, fornicators or belligerent children
 - b. Compensation of civil lawsuits
 - c. Regulations about concubines, slaves, a sister-in-law who is widowed and without child, etc.
2. The laws *ceased to apply* to God's people with the cessation of Israel as God's instrument for Gospel advancement.
3. Why were these strict, even harsh, standards set over Israel and not us?

- a. **Walter J. Chantry:** *God's Righteous Kingdom: The Law's Connection with the Gospel* (pp. 116-117, 121)

Israel was given more than ceremonial regulations at Sinai. By the hand of Moses ordinances were also given to regulate them as a political unit. As the worship of the Jews was governed by God, so was their social order. Another body of laws may be identified as judicial or civil. Thus the people of God were organized into a visible nation; its judicial order or civil organization was stipulated by the Most High. To prevent excessive transgressions by the Jews, a schoolmaster was placed over the elect in their minority. A very large rod was in the schoolmaster's hand. Stringent rules with harsh punishments were instituted to keep the children in bounds. Though the system was rigid, it was designed to deliver children from disaster into the saving arms of Christ. Most of these laws are directly associated with the Jewish state and its courts rather than with the temple and its ceremonies of worship. There is the harsh, unbending, rigorous, schoolmasterly element present. Strict fences are apparent, erected to prevent childish Jews from straying. For murder there was capital punishment. For adultery there was capital punishment. For blasphemy, for leading another away from God, for picking up sticks on the Sabbath—capital punishment awaited all. Such severe and rigorous treatment of the Jews was a kindness to them. In their sin they tended to stray from God. In their spiritual immaturity they would have been lost to the faith revealed in Christ and thus forever lost.

- b. Israel was the **incubator of Christ**: a protective environment for the Savior/Messiah to be born, reared and prepared for His saving ministry.
- c. Once Christ went to the Cross and rose from the dead, the nursery was no longer necessary.
- d. The Church had matured to the point where it was ready to reach the world: *Pentecost*
- e. *But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth.* (Acts 1:8)

4. Why don't we stone homosexuals to death, or execute rebellious teenagers, or kill fornicative young women? *Because we are to evangelize them! You can't save executed people.*

Or do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived: neither the sexually immoral, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor men who practice homosexuality, nor thieves, nor the greedy, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor swindlers will inherit the kingdom of God. And such were some of you. But you were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God. (1 Corinthians 6:9-11)

5. Does Israel's civil law have any benefit to us today? Certainly! It contains a *general principle* of civic right and wrong that applies to us.
- a. *To them also, as a body politic, He gave sundry judicial laws, which expired together with the state of that people; not obliging any other now, further than the general equity thereof may require. (Westminster Confession of Faith 19-4)*
 - b. It should be illegal to commit adultery, strike your parents, practice homosexuality, and commit abortion.
 - c. But the penalty may not be death as in Israel's time.

6. **Walter Chantry:** *God's Righteous Kingdom*, pp. 118, 119.

While distinctions between moral, ceremonial and judicial laws are of the utmost importance, a caution is necessary. It would be wrong to imagine that any of God's statutes given to Moses were arbitrary. It would be far from the truth to imagine that the three kinds of law are unrelated. Both ceremonial and judicial statutes of the Old Testament are firmly anchored in the moral law. For this reason a special reverence is given to the pure moral law—the Ten Commandments. All three kinds of law are woven very tightly into a unified covenant administration in Moses. Seldom can a text be labeled entirely moral, ceremonial, or civil. It would be a mistake to read through Exodus or Deuteronomy attempting to label one verse ceremonial and another moral. In many instances all three are intertwined so that it is seldom possible to make such neat identifications. The Ten Commandments are the glaring exception.

7. **Conclusion:** *We are bound by the moral law, freed from the ceremonial law, and guided by the civil law.*

II. THE THREE USES OF THE LAW (Deut. 5:22-33)

“These words the Lord spoke to all your assembly at the mountain out of the midst of the fire, the cloud, and the thick darkness, with a loud voice; and he added no more. And he wrote them on two tablets of stone and gave them to me. And as soon as you heard the voice out of the midst of the darkness, while the mountain was burning with fire, you came near to me, all the heads of your tribes, and your elders. And you said, ‘Behold, the Lord our God has shown us his glory and greatness, and we have heard his voice out of the midst of the fire. This day we have seen God speak with man, and man still live. Now therefore why should we die? For this great fire will consume us. If we hear the voice of the Lord our God any more, we shall die. For who is there of all flesh, that has heard the voice of the living God

speaking out of the midst of fire as we have, and has still lived? Go near and hear all that the Lord our God will say and speak to us all that the Lord our God will speak to you, and we will hear and do it.'

"And the Lord heard your words, when you spoke to me. And the Lord said to me, 'I have heard the words of this people, which they have spoken to you. They are right in all that they have spoken. Oh that they had such a mind as this always, to fear me and to keep all my commandments, that it might go well with them and with their descendants forever! Go and say to them, "Return to your tents." But you, stand here by me, and I will tell you the whole commandment and the statutes and the rules that you shall teach them, that they may do them in the land that I am giving them to possess.' You shall be careful therefore to do as the Lord your God has commanded you. You shall not turn aside to the right hand or to the left. You shall walk in all the way that the Lord your God has commanded you, that you may live, and that it may go well with you, and that you may live long in the land that you shall possess. (Deuteronomy 5:22-33)

A. The First Use of the Law: A Tutor to Christ

1. The Law of God has three uses in the life of people.
2. Laid out most clearly for us by **John Calvin**: *The Institutes of the Christian Religion; Book 2; ch. 7; sec 6; pp. 354ff)*

Let us survey briefly the function and use of what is called the "moral law." Now, so far as I understand it, it consists of three parts. The first part is this: while it shows God's righteousness, that is, the righteousness alone acceptable to God, it warns, informs, convicts, and lastly condemns, every man of his own unrighteousness.

3. Paul teaches this in Galatians 3:23-28.
 - a. *Now before faith came, we were held captive under the law, imprisoned until the coming faith would be revealed. So then, the law was our guardian until Christ came, in order that we might be justified by faith. But now that faith has come, we are no longer under a guardian, for in Christ Jesus you are all sons of God, through faith. For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is no male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus. (Galatians 3:23-28)*
 - b. Literally: "our tutor to Christ"
 - c. Designed to lead us to Christ
 - d. *Pedagogical, tutorial, elenctic*
4. How does this work? The moral law convicts us of our sin and of our utter helplessness to do anything that will save our souls. In frustration, we are driven to Gospel, grace and Christ.
5. **Brother Law seems harsh and unloving, but he is really exercising "tough love" on rebellious sinners, driving us to Sister Grace and forgiveness in Christ.**
6. The **conviction of sin**, in the human conscience, by the moral law, is what drives us to Christ for salvation.
7. This is Paul's point in Romans 7:7-25

What then shall we say? That the law is sin? By no means! Yet if it had not been for the law, I would not have known sin. For I would not have known what it is to covet if the law had not said, "You shall not covet." But sin, seizing an opportunity through the commandment, produced in me all kinds of covetousness. For apart from the law, sin lies dead. I was once alive apart from the law, but when the commandment came, sin came alive and I died. The very commandment that promised life proved to be death to me. For sin, seizing an opportunity through the commandment, deceived me and through it killed me. So the law is holy, and the commandment is holy and righteous and good.

Did that which is good, 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. For we know that the law is spiritual, but I am of the flesh, sold under sin. For I do not understand my own actions. For I do not do what I want, but I do the very thing I hate. Now if I do what I do not want, I agree with the law, that it is good. So now it is no longer I who do it, but sin that dwells within me. For I know that nothing good dwells in me, that is, in my flesh. For I have the desire to do what is right, but not the ability to carry it out. For I do not do the good I want, but the evil I do not want is what I keep on doing. Now if I do what I do not want, it is no longer I who do it, but sin that dwells within me.

So I find it to be a law that when I want to do right, evil lies close at hand. For I delight in the law of God, in my inner being, but I see in my members another law waging war against the law of my mind and making me captive to the law of sin that dwells in my members. Wretched man that I am! Who will deliver me from this body of death? Thanks be to God through Jesus Christ our Lord! So then, I myself serve the law of God with my mind, but with my flesh I serve the law of sin. (Romans 7:7-25)

8. **This is the law's primary purpose: To drive us to grace in Christ.**

B. The Second Use of the Law: *The Retainer of Evil*

1. The second thing the law does is to energize and activate the conscience.
2. It produces in the human soul a *fear of sinning* and the *fear of punishment*.
3. **John Calvin:** *The Institutes of the Christian Religion*; 2:7:10; p. 358

The second function of the law is this: at least by fear of punishment to restrain certain men who are untouched by any care for what is just and right unless compelled by hearing the dire threats in the law. But they are restrained, not because their inner mind is stirred or affected, but because, being bridled, so to speak, they keep their hands from outward activity, and hold inside the depravity that otherwise they would wantonly have indulged.

4. The law works like **an authority**: Its very presence infuses fear of punishment upon the hearts and souls of sinners:
 - a. Like a *policeman* parked in his squad car on the expressway: speeding slows down
 - b. Like a *principal* in the school hallway: shenanigans come to a halt
 - c. Like a *pastor* among the people: speech, jokes and worldly levity are replaced by "proper" speech

d. *Judicial, civil, political*

5. Imagine what fallen mankind would do if there were no Ten Commandments, no fear of evil and no thought of coming judgment! **Hell on earth!**

C. The Third Use of the Law: *The Guide for Christians*

1. The third use of the law applies to Christians: *The Ten Commandments show us how to love God, love others, and be holy.*

2. **John Calvin:** *The Institutes of the Christian Religion: 2:7:12; p. 360*

The third and principal use, which pertains more closely to the proper purpose of the law, finds its place among believers in whose hearts the Spirit of God already lives and reigns. Through the directing of the Spirit that they long to obey God, they still profit by the law in two ways. Here is the best instrument for them to learn more thoroughly each day the nature of the Lord's will to which they aspire, and to confirm them in the understanding of it. Again, because we need not only teaching but also exhortation, the servant of God will also avail himself of this benefit of the law: by frequent meditation upon it to be aroused to obedience, be strengthened in it, and be drawn back from the slippery path of transgression.

3. This is what Jesus pointed to in Matthew 22 and Moses said in Deuteronomy 6 –

a. *And he said to him, "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind. This is the great and first commandment. And a second is like it: You shall love your neighbor as yourself. On these two commandments depend all the Law and the Prophets."* (Matthew 22:37-40)

b. *"Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one. You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might.* (Deut. 6:4-5)

4. **This is the primary benefit of the law for you and me: to guide us in our Christian love and holiness...**

a. *Owe no one anything, except to love each other, for the one who loves another has fulfilled the law. For the commandments, "You shall not commit adultery, You shall not murder, You shall not steal, You shall not covet," and any other commandment, are summed up in this word: "You shall love your neighbor as yourself." Love does no wrong to a neighbor; therefore love is the fulfilling of the law.* (Romans 13:8-10)

b. *For you were called to freedom, brothers. Only do not use your freedom as an opportunity for the flesh, but through love serve one another. For the whole law is fulfilled in one word: "You shall love your neighbor as yourself."* (Galatians 5:13-14)

c. *Brothers, if anyone is caught in any transgression, you who are spiritual should restore him in a spirit of gentleness. Keep watch on yourself, lest you too be tempted. Bear one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ.*

And let us not grow weary of doing good, for in due season we will reap, if we do not give up. So then, as we have opportunity, let us do good to everyone, and especially to those who are of the household of faith. (Gal. 6:1-2, 9-10)

- a. *A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another: just as I have loved you, you also are to love one another. By this all people will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another. (John 13:34-35)*
 - b. *Everyone who believes that Jesus is the Christ has been born of God, and everyone who loves the Father loves whoever has been born of him. By this we know that we love the children of God, when we love God and obey his commandments. For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments. And his commandments are not burdensome. (1 John 5:1-3)*
5. This was the promise of the **New Covenant (grace)** to Jeremiah.
- But this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, declares the Lord: I will put my law within them, and I will write it on their hearts. And I will be their God, and they shall be my people. (Jeremiah 31:33)*
6. For the apostle: *The serious attempt to keep the moral law of God was the truest mark of a converted soul...not because of duty or fear, but because of love...the desire to obey the law so as to please God, love Jesus and help other people.*
- Do we then overthrow the law by this faith? By no means! On the contrary, we uphold the law. (Romans 3:31)*

III. THE THREE PARTS TO THE LAW (Deut. 5:6-21)

“I am the Lord your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery.

“You shall have no other gods before me.

“You shall not make for yourself a carved image, or any likeness of anything that is in heaven above, or that is on the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth. You shall not bow down to them or serve them; for I the Lord your God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers on the children to the third and fourth generation of those who hate me, but showing steadfast love to thousands of those who love me and keep my commandments.

“You shall not take the name of the Lord your God in vain, for the Lord will not hold him guiltless who takes his name in vain.

“Observe the Sabbath day, to keep it holy, as the Lord your God commanded you. Six days you shall labor and do all your work, but the seventh day is a Sabbath to the Lord your God. On it you shall not do any work, you or your son or your daughter or your male servant or your female servant, or your ox or your donkey or any of your livestock, or the sojourner who is within your gates, that your male servant and your female servant may rest as well as you. You shall remember that you were a slave in the land of Egypt, and the Lord your God brought you out from there with a mighty hand and an outstretched arm. Therefore the Lord your God commanded you to keep the Sabbath day.

“Honor your father and your mother, as the Lord your God commanded you, that your days may be long, and that it may go well with you in the land that the Lord your God is giving you.

“You shall not murder.

“*And you shall not commit adultery.*

“*And you shall not steal.*

“*And you shall not bear false witness against your neighbor.*

“*And you shall not covet your neighbor's wife. And you shall not desire your neighbor's house, his field, or his male servant, or his female servant, his ox, or his donkey, or anything that is your neighbor's.*’ (Deuteronomy 5:6-21)

A. The Character of God

1. Each of the Ten Commandments tells us three things.

- a. The first of these is the *character of God*.
- b. The law is a reflection of the nature of the lawgiver.

2. Proof? Look at how the Ten Commandments begin:

- a. *I am the Lord your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery.* (Deuteronomy 5:6)
- b. Then each law describes what God is like...
- c. ...and what we should be like as the *image of God*.
- d. *For I am the Lord your God. Consecrate yourselves therefore, and be holy, for I am holy. You shall not defile yourselves with any swarming thing that crawls on the ground. For I am the Lord who brought you up out of the land of Egypt to be your God. You shall therefore be holy, for I am holy.* (Leviticus 11:44-45)

And the Lord spoke to Moses, saying, “Speak to all the congregation of the people of Israel and say to them, You shall be holy, for I the Lord your God am holy. Every one of you shall revere his mother and his father, and you shall keep my Sabbaths: I am the Lord your God. Do not turn to idols or make for yourselves any gods of cast metal: I am the Lord your God. (Leviticus 19:1-4)

You shall not steal; you shall not deal falsely; you shall not lie to one another. You shall not swear by my name falsely, and so profane the name of your God: I am the Lord. (Leviticus 19:11-12)

“You shall not oppress your neighbor or rob him. The wages of a hired servant shall not remain with you all night until the morning. You shall not curse the deaf or put a stumbling block before the blind, but you shall fear your God: I am the Lord.

“You shall do no injustice in court. You shall not be partial to the poor or defer to the great, but in righteousness shall you judge your neighbor. You shall not go around as a slanderer among your people, and you shall not stand up against the life of your neighbor: I am the Lord.

“You shall not hate your brother in your heart, but you shall reason frankly with your neighbor, lest you incur sin because of him. You shall not take vengeance or bear a grudge against the sons of your own people, but you shall love your neighbor as yourself: I am the Lord. (Leviticus 19:13-18)

If a person turns to mediums and necromancers, whoring after them, I will set my face against that person and will cut him off from among his people. Consecrate yourselves, therefore, and be holy, for I am the Lord your God. Keep my statutes and do them; I am the Lord who sanctifies you. For anyone who curses his father or his mother shall surely be put to death; he has cursed his father or his mother; his blood is upon him. (Leviticus 20:6-9)

3. *“You shall be holy (as the image of God) for I am holy (as your creator, God)...*
4. *...and the way to see God’s holiness and our nobility as His creatures is in the Ten Commandments.*
5. **John Calvin:** *Institutes; 2:8:6; p. 372*

First, let us agree that through the law man’s life is molded not only to outward honesty but to inward and spiritual righteousness. Although no one can deny this, very few duly note it. This happens because they do not look to the Lawgiver, by whose character the nature of the law also is to be appraised.

B. The Fulfillment of Righteousness in Christ

1. The second thing the law shows us in how Christ fulfills the law’s demands and earns for His people His perfect righteousness.
2. We will be examining the *corrections* to our misunderstanding of the law as we hear Jesus teach us in the Sermon on the Mount: *“You have heard it said...but I say...”*
3. *Do not think that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I have not come to abolish them but to fulfill them. (Matthew 5:17)*
4. **John Calvin:** *Institutes; 2:8:7; p. 374*

They have thought that Christ added to the law when He only restored it to its integrity, in that He freed and cleansed it when it had been obscured by the falsehoods and defiled by the leaven of the Pharisees.

5. As we examine Christ's life, teachings and ministry, we will discover how the law is supposed to be kept, and how Jesus does that for us.

C. The Requirements of the Law for Us

1. Finally, each commandment lays down for us the moral, spiritual and relational demands of God upon our lives.
2. We will discover in each law three parameters of our lives:
 - a. **Purpose:** The primary intent of each law
 - b. **Duties:** That which we are commanded to do
 - c. **Prohibitions:** That which we are forbidden from doing
3. **John Calvin:** *Institutes; 2:8:8; pp. 374-375*

The commandments and prohibitions always contain more than is expressed in words. Now, I think this would be the best rule, if attention be directed to the reason of the commandment; that

is, in each commandment to ponder why it was given to us. Thus in each commandment we must investigate what it is concerned with; then we must seek out its purpose, until we find what the Lawgiver testifies there to be pleasing or displeasing to himself. Finally, from this same thing we must derive an argument on the other side, in this manner: if this pleases God, the opposite displeases Him; if this displeases, the opposite pleases Him; if He commands this, He forbids the opposite; if He forbids this, He enjoins the opposite.

4. *The Bible primarily teaches what man must believe about God and what God requires of man. (Westminster Shorter Catechism #3)*
5. *The virtues and the vices exposed in our lives by each of the holy commandments*
6. **In fact:** *this will be our outline in the weeks to come as we examine each of the Ten Commandments*
 - a. The Character of God
 - b. The Fulfillment in Christ
 - c. The Purpose of Each Law
 - d. The Virtues and Vices in Life

CONCLUSION: There may be no more unpopular sermon series possible to preach in our age than the Ten Commandments.

1. But there also may be no sermon series more relevant, timely and crucial to American lives, in the year 2010, than the Ten Commandments.
2. Look at life around us. It is exactly what Jesus said it would be...
 - a. *Then they will deliver you up to tribulation and put you to death, and you will be hated by all nations for my name's sake. And then many will fall away and betray one another and hate one another. And many false prophets will arise and lead many astray. And because lawlessness will be increased, the love of many will grow cold. But the one who endures to the end will be saved. And this gospel of the kingdom will be proclaimed throughout the whole world as a testimony to all nations, and then the end will come. (Matthew 24:9-14)*
 - b. Lawlessness...lovelessness...tribulation
3. **Anarchy:** The absence of law to serve as a restraining power against evil, and the resultant loss of a moral compass for society. *"Each man did what was right in his own eyes..."*
4. **Rebellion:** The resistance to God's authority to govern, guide and guard our lives, our society, our world, and the resultant loss of godliness and goodness that civilizes all of life.
5. **Legalism:** The attempt to replace God's standards with our own in order to avoid the conviction of sin, the need to humble ourselves before Christ, and the grace that leads us to redemption.
6. **Don Henley:** *"Ah...these times are so uncertain, there's a yearning undefined, and people filled with rage. We all need a little tenderness; how can love survive in such a graceless age?"*

7. Perhaps it's time to return to the Church's catechesis, to the *Three Formulae*, to the moral law of God: The Ten Commandments.
8. The answer to today's modern sorrows will be found in God's ancient law.