

Subject: *The Purpose of God's Commandments*

Scripture: *Exodus 20:1-17*

Several weeks ago when we started this series on the Ten Commandments, we pointed out some basic features of God's moral law.

- The authority of the commandments – They are God-given commandments
- The clarity of the commandments – They are clear and easy to understand
- The gravity of the commandments – They are serious and to be taken seriously
- The ability of the commands – That is what we are going to consider now.

Some believe the Ten Commandments were only important for the Jews in OT times.

Some think we are saved by keeping the Ten Commandments.

Why are the Ten Commandments connected to the Gospel and God's plan of salvation?

What does the Bible say?

The Ten Commandments were given by God for these important reasons:

1. The commandments control and restrain sinners

Laws are not made for righteous people, but for evil people. We understand that principle. We speak of law and order. Without law you cannot have order. The Book of Judges is perhaps the darkest book in the Bible. We find this statement twice: *In those days there was no king in Israel; every man did that which was right in his own eyes.* Every man was a law unto himself. There was no king and no laws being enforced, and therefore there was no order.

1 Timothy 1:8 (NKJV) But we know that the law is good if one uses it lawfully, knowing this: that the law is not made for a righteous person, but for the lawless and insubordinate, for the ungodly and for sinners, for the unholy and profane, for murderers of fathers and murderers of mothers, for manslayers, for fornicators, for sodomites, for kidnappers, for liars, for perjurers, and if there is any other thing that is contrary to sound doctrine, according to the glorious gospel of the blessed God which was committed to my trust.

Romans 7:12 *Wherefore the law is holy, and the commandment holy, and just, and good.*

The problem is not the law, but the sinner. We are sinners by birth, by choice, and by habit.

2. The commandments convict and condemn sinners

Romans 7:7 *What shall we say then? Is the law sin? God forbid. Nay, I had not known sin but by the law: for I had not known lust, except the law had said, Thou shalt not covet.*

Romans 3:19-20 *Now we know that what things soever the law saith, it saith to them who are under the law: that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God. Therefore by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight: for by the law is the knowledge of sin.*

The law reveals our sin, but it doesn't remove it. It shows us our guilt, but can't take it away. The law convicts us, but it can't cleanse us. The law is like mirror. It shows us if our face is dirty but it doesn't clean it up. The law is like an X-ray or an MRI. It shows us what's wrong, but it can't fix the problem. The law can't help us; it just leaves us helpless. The law

convinces us that we are lawbreakers and we can't live up to God's perfect standard and that we will be judged by that standard...but that's all it can do.

1 John 3:4 *Whosoever committeth sin transgresseth also the law: for sin is the transgression of the law.*

That sound bad, but it's worse than you may think. It's worse in terms of the extent of sin.

James 1:10-11 *For whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all. For he that said, Do not commit adultery, said also, Do not kill. Now if thou commit no adultery, yet if thou kill, thou art become a transgressor of the law.*

3. The commandments lead sinners to Christ for forgiveness

The law can't forgive us, but it leads to the One who can.

The law can't redeem us, but it leads us to the One who can.

The law can't justify us, but it brings us to the One who can.

Galatians 3:24 *Wherefore the law was our schoolmaster (tutor) to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith.*

Galatians 2:16 *Knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law, but by the faith of Jesus Christ, even we have believed in Jesus Christ, that we might be justified by the faith of Christ, and not by the works of the law: for by the works of the law shall no flesh be justified.*

Galatians 2:21 *I do not frustrate the grace of God: for if righteousness come by the law, then Christ is dead in vain.*

4. The commandments show us how to live and please God

The Ten Commandments tell us what pleases God and what offends Him. The

Commandments are always binding on us, even after we are saved and live as God's people.

R. C. Sproul put it this way: "Our redemption is from the curse of God's law, not from our duty to obey it. We are justified, not because of our obedience to God's law, but in order that we may become obedient to God's law."

Jesus said in *John 14:15*, *If you love me, keep my commandments.*

A person gives evidence that he is a Christian because he loves Christ and obeys His law.

There are two dangers in connection with God's moral law, the Ten Commandments:

legalism (believing that we are saved by keeping the Law) and antinomianism (believing that once we are saved that releases us from any obligation to keep the Law). Both of these are false doctrines and both are dangerous.