**The Ten Commandments:**

**Introduction and Background**

*"The man who does not know the nature of the law cannot know the nature of sin. And he who does not know the nature of sin cannot know the nature of the savior."* – John Bunyan

*"The law is what shows us our need for the saving work of Jesus Christ. Then, once we come to Christ by believing the gospel of his cross and empty tomb, it shows us how to live for his glory."* – Philip Ryken

**Why study the Ten Commandments?**

1. Because the Ten Commandments teach us about God, and show us the character of Christ.
2. Because the Bible tells us to study and obey the Ten Commandments.

**Which parts of the law are still in force?** (3 categories of laws)

* + - 1. Ceremonial Law:
      2. Civil Law:

* + - 1. Moral Law:

1. Because the Ten Commandments show us what full and flourishing human life looks like.[[1]](#footnote-1)
2. Because the Law and gospel go together in the covenant of grace.

**Three Uses of the Law[[2]](#footnote-2)**

1. To reveal our need for a savior.
   1. **Romans 8:3**
   2. **Romans 7:7**
   3. **Galatians 3:24**

Augustine: "The usefulness of the law lies in convicting man of his infirmity and moving him to call upon the remedy of grace which is in Christ."

Luther: "Therefore we do not abolish the Law but we show its true function and use, namely, that it is a most useful servant impelling us to Christ. After the Law has humbled, terrified, and completely crushed you, so that you are on the brink of despair, then see to it that you know how to use the Law correctly; for its function and use is not only to disclose the sin and wrath of God but also to drive us to Christ."

Calvin: "Moses had no other intention than to invite all men to go straight to Christ."

Spurgeon: "As the sharp needle prepares the way for the thread, so the piercing law makes a way for the bright silver thread of divine grace."

1. To restrain sin in society
2. To teach people who have been redeemed how to live for the glory of their God.
   1. **Exodus 20:1-2.**

J.C. Ryle: "There is no greater mistake than to suppose that a Christian has nothing to do with the law and the Ten Commandments, because he cannot be justified by keeping them. The same Holy Ghost who convinces the believer of sin by the law, and leads him to Christ for justification, will always lead him to a spiritual use of the law, as a friendly guide, in the pursuit of sanctification."

**How do we study the Ten Commandments? 7 Rules for interpretation:[[3]](#footnote-3)**

1. **Scripture interprets Scripture**.
2. **Inside/Out**

**Calvin:** “If a king were to forbid by edict debauchery, murder and theft, I admit that anyone who simply felt the desire to be promiscuous, or to steal or murder, but who stopped short without attempting to act, would not have to pay the prescribed penalty. That is because the purview of the moral lawgiver goes no further than outward decency; as long as no wrong is done, his laws are not infringed. But God, from whose eyes nothing is hidden and who does not stop so much at the outward appearance of virtue as at purity of heart, in forbidding debauchery, murder and robbery, forbids all fleshly desire, hatred, greed for another’s goods, deceit and the like. Because he is a spiritual lawgiver, he speaks no less to the soul than to the body. So wrath and hatred are murder so far as the soul is concerned, greed is robbery, and undisciplined love is debauchery.”[[4]](#footnote-4)

1. **Both sides:**
2. **Categories:**

* 1. **Matthew 5:21-24**.

1. **My brother's keeper:** 
   1. **Luke 17:1-3**
2. **Law of tables**
3. **All at once rule**

**The Curse of the Law-**

* WLC and the 9th commandment.
* Machen: "A low view of the law always brings legalism in religion; a high view of law makes a man a seeker after grace."

**Summary:**

1. The Ten Commandments enable us to understand the full meaning of Christ’s perfect obedience. Thus, they enable us to understand justification
2. The moral law, then, reveals the full extent of Christ's atonement. A narrow view of the law and guilt/sin fosters a shallow understanding of the work of Christ on the cross.
3. The moral law reveals the full duty of the Christian life. The moral law then enables us to understand sanctification, and to rely on grace.

**Bibliography**

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Ryken, Philip Graham. *Written in Stone: The Ten Commandments and Today’s Moral Crisis*. Phillipsburg, NJ: P & R Publishing, 2010.

1. Packer, *Keeping the Ten Commandments*, 11. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Much of the following is owed to Phil Ryken, *Written in Stone*. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. Ibid., 42–55. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. Calvin, *The Institutes of the Christian Religion*, 114. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)