

**TEACHING GOAL**

To study the rules which will enable us to rightly understand the Ten Commandments.

**DOCTRINAL STANDARDS**

- Q. What did God at first reveal to man for the rule of his obedience?
- A. The rule that God at first revealed to man for his obedience, was the moral law.
- Q. Where is the moral law summarily comprehended?
- A. The moral law is summarily comprehended in the Ten Commandments.

S.C. 40-41, L.C. 99, W.C. of F. XIX, Savoy 19, Young 74,75

**SCRIPTURAL BASIS**

**Study Passage:** Deuteronomy 6

**Support Passages:** James 2:10, Romans 7:14, Colossians 3:5, Amos 8:5, Proverbs 1:19, Matthew 15:4-6, Job 36:21, Hebrews 11:25, I Thessalonians 5:22, Jude 23, Genesis 18:19, I Timothy 5:22

**BIBLE STORY**

Luke 10:38-42; Mary and Martha and their priorities.

**MEMORY ASSIGNMENT**

"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." (Deuteronomy 6:4-5, ESV)

**APPLICATION**

It is our duty before God to correctly understand His laws. It is our method to prosperity and to please our God and King.

## SUMMARY

The Westminster Standards enumerate eight rules, the observing of which enables us to rightly understand the Ten Commandments.<sup>1</sup> They may be summarized as follows:

RULE 1 - The Law is perfect. It binds everyone forever to perfect obedience. This is a direct quote of Psalm 19:7 and as James writes, "For whoever keeps the whole law and yet stumbles in one point, he has become guilty of all."<sup>2</sup>

RULE 2 - The Law is spiritual hence it operates upon our consciences and other faculties of the soul. The Catechism here quotes Romans 7:14, "For we know that the Law is spiritual,..." The knowledge, will and affections of Paul are influenced by God's Law thus the Law of God is not merely a showpiece of masterful legal systems but forms the basis for Paul's whole world and life view.

RULE 3 - The Law must be taken as a complete context of God's will for us. A given precept of God may be treated, therefore, in several commandments. Colossians 3:5 defines idolatry as "immorality, impurity, passion, evil desire and greed." Thus do several of the Ten Commandments deal with different aspects of the same precept.

RULE 4 - Negative commandments have corresponding positive commandments and vice versa. Ephesians 4:28, for example, gives the positive side of the commandment "you shall not steal", stating "rather let him labor, performing with his own hands what is good,..."

RULE 5 - God's Law holds true under all circumstances. What is forbidden is never to be done and what is commanded is always to be done. Paul, in Romans 3:8, points out the need for consistency in our law-keeping by stating, concerning the common fallacy "let us do evil that good may come", "their condemnation is just."

RULE 6 - Sins and duties similar in kind to explicit sins or duties are likewise forbidden or commanded. Paul writes that we should "abstain from every form of evil"<sup>3</sup>, and after listing a number of sins<sup>4</sup> he warns us against doing "similar things".

RULE 7 - We must endeavor, as we are able, to see to it that others live under the same terms of God's Law that we ourselves live under. Abraham, for example<sup>5</sup>, "commanded his household after him to keep the way of the LORD by doing righteousness and justice;" thus imposing God's Law upon those over whom he was in authority.

RULE 8 - We must not participate in the sins of others but help them to be obedient to the Law of God. Again we turn to Paul, who commands "and do not participate in the unfruitful deeds of darkness, but instead even expose them."<sup>6</sup>

It is obvious that these rules are contrary to the commonly held evangelical position of our day, namely, that the Ten Commandments belong to an ancient civilization and are not binding on us today. These rules, however, reiterate the assertions that we have made in previous lessons concerning the abiding validity of the Law. We do not merely believe that the Ten Commandments are valid today but that they form the very basis for a modern society that prospers and enjoys the benefits of God's grace. Rushdoony notes, "the Law, then, first asserts principles, second, it cites cases to develop the implications of those principles, and, third, the Law has as its purpose and direction the restitution of God's order."<sup>7</sup>

The laws of our nation should be predicated on the supremacy of God's Law but increasingly they are being bypassed in favor of the state. The modern evangelical community does a great deal to strengthen the power of the state by deferring to its authority instead of that of God. It is our duty, therefore, to correctly use the Law of God and to this end we must correctly understand them. These eight rules, then, aid us in this endeavor.

**idol•a•try** \-trē\ *noun* <sup>8</sup>

*plural idol•a•tries*

(13th century)

**1** : the worship of a physical object as a god

**2** : immoderate attachment or devotion to something

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<sup>1</sup> Question 99, The Westminster Larger Catechism.

<sup>2</sup> James 2:10

<sup>3</sup> I Thessalonians 5:22

<sup>4</sup> Galatians 5:21

<sup>5</sup> Genesis 18:19

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<sup>6</sup> Ephesians 5:11

<sup>7</sup> Rousas John Rushdoony, *The Institutes of Biblical Law*, The Craig Press, 1973, p12

<sup>8</sup> Merriam-Webster, I. (1996, c1993). *Merriam-Webster's collegiate dictionary*. (10th ed.). Springfield, Mass., U.S.A.: Merriam-Webster.