

“Stone Chiseled or Heart Written”

Presentation Handout

More Than Paper...

- Over the years we’ve had our (presenter: David) wedding vows framed, hanging on our bedroom wall. These personally written vows to each other were a beautiful reminder of the love God gave us for each other!
- But..., I must confess, I didn’t read them every morning when I woke up. I knew they were there, yes, and re-read them periodically, but not every day.
- It wasn’t a matter of not loving my wife, I did, and I still do! And will continue to do so by the grace of God.
- The issue with our vows is: they are more than paper. They were internalized. Now..., this doesn’t mean our love for each other hasn’t had challenges or rough spots, along the way. It has!
- Yet..., our love for each other has grown and we have been faithful to our vows because what we wrote and read to each other on our wedding day, almost 29 years ago, is written in our minds and hearts—Internalized..., not just wall decorations!
- It should (must) be the same with God’s Law. If His 10 Commandment Law is just “hung on the wall”—chiseled on stone tablets, then:
 - “Obedience” becomes a shallow, outward conformity—legalism—like the Israelites in the Old Testament and/or the religious leaders in Jesus’ day!
 - This type of “obedience” takes God for granted professing loyalty to Him, while actually doing the opposite—living our own life in self-deception, holding onto wrong motivates, inward hatred of others, lust, fraud, unchristian attitudes, etc.
 - ❖ Sadly, we see this phenomenon in the lives of the religious leaders in Jesus’ day as they professed loyalty to God as His followers, while at the same time plotting to crucify the very God they claimed to follow.
 - “Obedience” becomes appeasement of God, motivated by fear or reward!
 - “Obedience” is simply “outmaneuvering” God to keep Him happy, so He doesn’t see us with a judging, condemning eye.
 - “Obedience” along with God’s Law becomes a galling “yoke of bondage” that one must do or else, like doing a detestable or hated task.
 - “Obedience” becomes a human evaluated self-righteousness that judges others as less and oneself better, like the parable of the Pharisee and the Tax Collector {[Luke 18:9-14](#)}.

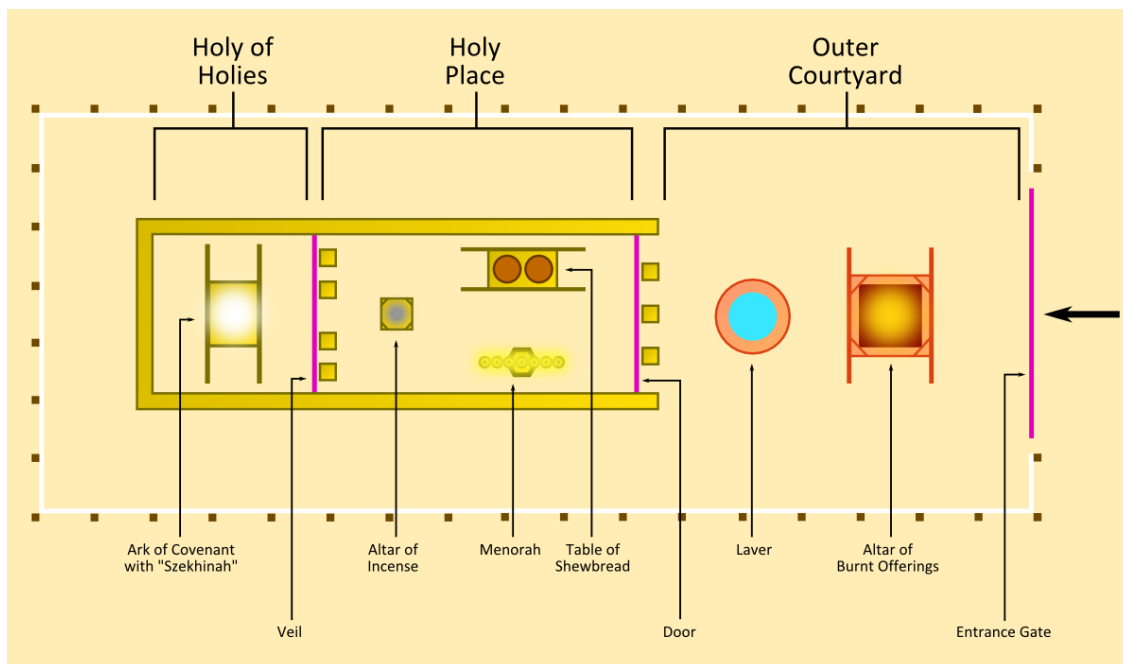
Take-Away: I believe this is why Christians have “done away with” God’s Law as legalism, a “works trip,” or non-Christians throwing it out altogether, ignoring it non-essential/useless. The problem with these view regarding of His Law, it’s negative. They believe it doesn’t reflect God’s love and the gospel. It only condemns us, making us feel inferior or lost. ***Is this true? I don’t believe it is!*** Let me explain....

The Problem Isn't the Law

- The real issue isn't God's Law but the misuse of it, wrong motives for obeying it, and/or just misunderstanding its purpose.
 - We read this problem in *Hebrews 8:7-8*.
 - The writer of Hebrews says, "Finding fault with them" (Israelites) {*v. 8a*}, not the Law, is the reason God instituted a new covenant, which was actually the original, everlasting, "old" covenant—righteousness by faith, the heart of the gospel and our salvation in Jesus!
 - ❖ The issue was the people's relationship to the Law—they flippantly thought they could "obey" it in their own human power, revealed by the Israelites' promise to God that they would faithfully obey whatever He commanded when He was about to give them His Law on Mt Sinai {*Exodus 19:3-8a (4-6, 8a); Deuteronomy 5:27*}.
 - ❖ Unfortunately, within a short time God's people danced around a calf-idol, proclaiming it as their god who delivered them from Egyptian bondage. So much for human promises to obey God in one's own human strength!

Take-Away: God's answer to this spiritual dilemma: taking His Law from distant, outward, lifeless, chiseled tablets of stone laying in the Ark of the Covenant in the Most Holy Place of the sanctuary and writing it in His people's minds and on their hearts instead—internalizing it so it becomes real to them.

This is the new/everlasting covenant promise we discover in *Jeremiah 31:31-34*, which is quoted in *Hebrews 8:8b-12*. So, how does this new/everlasting covenant put a different "spin" on God's 10 Commandment Law?



God's Law & the New/Everlasting Covenant

- **Reveals God's character** {*Romans 7:12*}
 - The Law of God laid in the Most Holy Place of the sanctuary, under the very presence of God's Shekinah Glory in the Ark of the Covenant.

- Along with the Ark with its Mercy Seat and covering angels, God's Law is the only thing in the Most Holy Place with God.
- His Law ushers us into His very presence as it reveals His character to us—His righteousness, holiness, beauty, etc.—the expression of His character of love, codified love, lived out.
 - ❖ Because it's the revelation of God's character, it keeps our focus on God, instead of our own human works. Salvation, eternity, works, etc. are not about us, but instead, about God. He's the focus of our worship!
 - ✓ Thus we bask in a holy awe of God as we focus on the beauty of His Law in a correct way.
 - ❖ We also discover in God's Law the standard for our Christian character and the condition for eternal life (not legalism or works). Hear me out in our next point....
- **Condemns human sin and self-righteousness** {Romans 7:7}
 - Someone might be thinking: *I knew it was coming—legalism. I'm saved by the Law, my obedience to it. Wait...! It's not what you think....*
 - God's Law actually keeps us in the holy-awe of His righteousness!
 - Living in God's holy-awe produces a realization that unless one has Jesus' righteousness by faith, he/she cannot be saved, nor can they obey from the heart out of a motivate of love.
 - Though it reveals God's love, it pronounces death upon the sinner—the transgressor of it. This is what keeps us focused on God's holy-awe and not ourselves.
 - Because when we lose this holy-awe of God we think we can save ourselves in some way through our own human effort, which lowers the holiness and righteousness of God to a human level—making God common and/or replaces Him with other things that pull us away from Him {Romans 10:3}.
 - Sin separates us from God, but it's God's Law that helps us:
 - Appreciate the beauty of God's love for us as we humbly realize our unworthiness to be loved and/or saved by Him.
 - Grow spiritually as it motivates and empowers transformation in our lives—we realize our sin crucified Jesus, hurts Him, and dishonors Him.
 - It points out/highlights/magnifies inward as well as outward sin that destroys divine and human relationships along with physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual health.
- **Protects/preserves us from sin and its destructive results** {Psalm 19:7-14}.
 - God's Law is like the lines on the road that keep us in the correct lane avoiding oncoming traffic, or like guard rails along the edge of a road that keep us from going over the embankment to our death or injury, or like warning labels that protect our health.
 - It does this by keeping us living in the spiritual freedom that Jesus purchased for us, preventing sin-bondage from destructive thoughts, attitudes, or actions that spawn fear, guilt, shame, etc. {Genesis 3}.
 - ❖ True freedom is only found in God's Law-boundary through heart obedience. Heart obedience produces true freedom in one's life, not sin or doing what

we want, what feels good, what we deem best, etc. because our human perceptions are sin-deceived!

❖ Without God's Law one ends up in spiritual bondage and death, just ask Adam & Eve.

▪ **Revelation of God's divine grace-power-promise** {Exodus 20:1-2; Psalm 81:8-13}

- When you ask most people to tell you where the 10 Commandments begin, they'll generally begin at Commandment #1. However, this is not where it begins.
 - There's actually a Preamble before the 1st commandment {Exodus 20:1-2}.
 - ❖ This gospel promise of God's grace and mercy is what makes the 10 Commandments, actually 10 Promises—"You will not...."
 - ❖ Asaph under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit reflects this emphasis in *Psalm 81:8-13*.
 - ✓ God's 10 Commandment Law is really 10 Promises of what His love, grace, and salvation produces in one's life who receives Jesus as Savior and Lord and is in-filled with the Holy Spirit.
 - ✓ Obedience, then, is the fruit of salvation, not a means to it!
 - Unfortunately, the children of Israel missed this beautiful, profound truth!
 - ❖ This is what led them to promise God they would do whatever He commanded. Obviously, they felt God was Someone to fear who demanded the impossible from them.
 - ❖ Many today, still view God this way, believing His Law is an impossible yoke of condemnation, reflected in their interpretation/view of *John 14:15*—is it a command or promise?
 - ✓ *Command*: "If you love Me, **keep** My commandments!" Implied...in one's own power.... And...if you don't.... 10 COMMANDS!
 - ✓ *Promise*: "If you love Me you **will** keep My commandments!" Based on the context of *v. 23*, it's a promise—"You will..."—10 Promises!

What Makes the Difference?

- Stone chiseled or heart written...!

*And Moses turned and went down from the mountain,
and the two tablets of the Testimony were in his hand.*

...Now the tablets were the work of God,

and the writing was the writing of God engraved on the tablets." Exodus 32:15-16

"He (Moses) took the Testimony and put it into the ark..." Exodus 40:20

*"Behold, the days are coming, says the Lord,
when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah—
not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers
in the day that I took them by the hand to lead them out of the land of Egypt,
My covenant which they broke, though I was a husband to them, says the Lord.
But this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel
after those days, says the Lord:
I will put My law in their minds, and write it on their hearts;
and I will be their God, and they shall be My people."*

Jeremiah 31:31-33 NKJV

- As one reads *Jeremiah 31* or *Hebrews 8*, I (presenter: David) don't believe God ever intended to chisel His Law on tablets of stone. Instead, He longed to write it in humans' minds and on their hearts!
- The spirituality—internalizing—of God's Law
 - In the Sermon on the Mount (*Matthew chapters 5-7*) Jesus as the new "Moses" expanded on God's Law by showing/sharing the spiritual meaning of it as it should have been understood at Mt Sinai in *Exodus 19 & 20*.
 - This is how God's Law is supposed to be lived out in the lives of His people as it's written in their minds and on their hearts by the Holy Spirit.
 - Commandment #1 – You will have no other gods before God (*Exodus 20:3; Deuteronomy 5:7*)
 - Whatever one cherishes that lessens their love for God or interferes with their commitment or service for Him, has become a god/idol in place of God.
 - ❖ Idols can be one's attitudes, boyfriend/girlfriend, family, ideas, political affiliations/views, religious beliefs, schooling, social media, work, etc.
 - Commandment #2 – You will not make carved images.... (*Exodus 20:4-6; Deuteronomy 5:8-10*)
 - Lowering the conception of God by representing Him through material objects turns one's mind from the Creator to the created.
 - ❖ The close and sacred relationship between God and His people is represented under the figure of marriage with idolatry being called spiritual adultery, which God jealously guards against.
 - Commandment #3 – You will not take God's name in vain/contempt.... (*Exodus 20:7; Deuteronomy 5:11*)
 - This not only prohibits false promises or common swearing, but also treating God's name in a light or careless manner without regard to His holiness.
 - We all should meditate upon God's majesty, His purity, and holiness that the heart may be impressed with a sense of His exalted character, awe, and reverence.
 - Commandment #4 – You will keep the Sabbath holy.... (*Exodus 20:8-11 Deuteronomy 5:12-15*)
 - The Sabbath reminds humanity that God is the gracious Creator of our world, distinguishing Him from all false gods and also our gracious Provider of needs..
 - ❖ He had/has the power to create something from nothing simply through speaking His word (*Psalms 33:6, 9*).
 - ❖ He cares about humanity's needs providing for them because He is love (*Psalms 145:14-16*).
 - Also the Sabbath reminds humanity that God is the Redeemer who saves from the bondage of sin (*Deuteronomy 5:6, 12-(15)*).
 - ❖ As only God can create, He is the only One who can re-create/redeem. Humanity cannot redeem/save themselves from sin.
 - God's Sabbath is the only commandment where both the name and title of the Lawgiver is found. It contains His seal as Creator, Lawgiver, and Redeemer (*Revelation 7:1-3; 14:1-6*),

- All who keep the seventh day holy, signify by their worship they are worshipers of the Lord God, honoring Him as Creator, Redeemer, and Lawgiver—the only One who can create, re-create/redeem, and deserves our worship.
- Commandment #5 – You will honor your father and mother.... {*Exodus 20:12; Deuteronomy 5:16*}
 - Parents are entitled to a degree of love and respect due to no other person because God Himself has charged them with the responsibility for raising their children to love and serve Him.
 - ❖ Parents in a sense, during the early years of their children’s lives, stand in the place of God—representing Him to them.
 - Children are not only to yield respect, submission, and obedience to their parents, but also to give them love and tenderness, lighten their cares, guard their reputation, and comfort them in their old age.
 - In a broader sense, this commandment involves respect for ministers, rulers/leaders, and all others to whom God has delegated authority.
 - The challenge of this commandment is when an individual’s parents are not worthy of his/her love, care, respect, etc. based on their actions, attitudes, etc.
 - ❖ In these sad, difficult cases one can still love and respect the parent from a distance in a safe way.
 - ❖ Also an individual can honor and respect a parent by living their lives well personally, breaking by God’s grace, the generational family dysfunctional sin cycle.
- Commandment #6 – You will not murder.... {*Exodus 20:13; Deuteronomy 5:17*}
 - “Murder” is a better translation than the word “kill.”
 - All acts of injustice which tend to shorten life; the spirit of hatred and revenge or the indulgence of any passion leading to injurious acts toward others, or causes us to wish them harm; a selfish neglect of caring for the needy or suffering; all self-indulgence or unnecessary deprivation or excessive labor that tends to injure health are in some way violations of this commandment {*Matthew 5:21-24*}.
- Commandment #7 – You will not commit adultery.... {*Exodus 20:14; Deuteronomy 5:18*}
 - This commandment forbids not only acts of outward impurity, but also inward sensual thoughts and desires, or any practice that tends to excite them.
 - ❖ Purity is demanded not only in the outward life but in the secret intents and emotions of the heart. Christ taught even an evil thought or look can be adultery {*Matthew 5:27-28*}.
 - Divorce for any other reason except for what Jesus allowed—sexual impurity/immorality {*Matthew 5:31-32; 19:9*} involves adultery {*Matthew 19:9; Mark 10:11-12; Luke 16:18*}.
- Commandment #8 – You will not steal.... {*Exodus 20:15; Deuteronomy 5:19*}
 - This commandment condemns slavery, wars of conquest, theft and robbery.
 - It also demands strict integrity and honesty in the smallest details of life—not taking advantage of others in business dealings, payment of debts or wages, or not benefiting financially through the ignorance, weakness, or misfortune of another person. If any of these happen it’s regarded by God as fraud.

- Commandment #9 – You will not bear false witness/lie.... {*Exodus 20:16; Deuteronomy 5:20*}
 - This involves false testimony or any attempt/intention to deceive another person, by:
 - ❖ nonverbal communication or spoken words,
 - ❖ intentional overstatement or hint or insinuation calculated to convey an erroneous or exaggerated impression,
 - ❖ statement of facts in way that misleads,
 - ❖ any effort to defame another’s reputation through misrepresentation, evil surmising, slander, or gossip,
 - ❖ the intentional suppression of truth that hurts others
 - Sadly, we see this all the time in politics.
- Commandment #10 – You will not covet.... {*Exodus 20:17; Deuteronomy 5:21*}
 - This commandment is unique in that it involves/addresses an inward attitude, not an outward act, which was the emphasis of Jesus’ Sermon on the Mount {*Matthew 5:21-37*}.
 - ❖ It strikes at the very root of all sins—selfish desire—from which springs sinful acts.
 - ❖ He/she who is living in obedience to God's law by His grace will refrain from indulging a sinful desire for that which belongs to another.

Take-Away: When we examine God’s Law, reflecting on its deeper spiritual meaning, we’re quickly humbled, and our spiritual “Pharisaical” pride is silenced. We’re doomed! We can’t obey God’s Law. It’s humanly impossible. That’s...the good news! We can’t but God can.

The Holy Spirit transforms our thoughts, motives, and actions by writing God’s 10 Commandment Law in our minds and on our hearts. Then we’ll love God’s Law because it becomes 10 Promises of His beautiful, loving, holy character, a revelation of His grace-power to transform, and the hope that we can become like our God in attitude and action!

LIVING CHOICE: Will you love the Law of your God, walking by His grace in its precepts—inwardly and outwardly—in a transformed life through the Holy Spirit?