

THE CATECHETICAL CHURCH



The Ten Commandments

1. Romans 2:14,15 reads: “For when Gentiles, who do not have the law, by nature do what the law requires...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.” According to that, how does God give his law to all people?

God gives his law to all people by writing it on their hearts. The conscience is the voice within a person that bears witness to God’s law.

2. In what two ways will a person’s conscience err and show itself to be undependable?

A person’s conscience may become so hardened that it no longer bothers him when he sins, or it may tell him something is sinful when it is not.

3. Because a person’s conscience is not always dependable, God gave his law a second way—written in the Bible in the form of the Ten Commandments—so that we might know exactly what his will is. In Matthew 22:37-39, Jesus summarized the commandments: “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.”

- How did Jesus summarize the first table of God’s law (Commandments 1-3)?

Jesus summarized the first table with “Love God!”

- How did he summarize the second table (Commandments 4-10)?

He summarized the second with “Love your neighbor!”

- With which word did he summarize the entire law?

The entire law can be summarized with the word Love!

4. Using your family's Small Catechism, define the following:

- **sin**

Sin means to "miss the mark" of perfection that God demands we hit.

- **transgression**

Transgression is "crossing the line" into what God forbids.

- **sin of omission**

A sin of omission is failing to do what God demands us to do.

- **iniquity**

Iniquity is "failing to measure up" to God's standard of perfection.

- **sin of commission**

A sin of commission is doing what God forbids.

5. Since God demands that we keep the commandments perfectly, it is impossible for the commandments to save us. Saint Paul wrote: "For by works of the law no human being will be justified in his sight" (Romans 3:20). Nonetheless, God's law still serves several good purposes. What, according to each of the following passages, is the purpose of God's law?

- "The law is not laid down for the just but for the lawless and disobedient, for the ungodly and sinners..." (1 Timothy 1:9).

The law serves as a curb, preserving order in this world by keeping the wicked actions of all people within bounds.

- "Through the law comes knowledge of sin." (Romans 3:20).

The law serves as a mirror, showing all people their sin and their need for a Savior.

- "Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path" (Psalm 119:105).

The law also serves as a guide, showing Christians the way of life that is pleasing to God.

6. 1 John 4:19 reads: “We love because he first loved us.” What does this verse tell us about the power to obey God’s commandments?

The law does not give us the strength to obey the commandments. Only the gospel of God’s love for us in Christ inspires and empowers us to obey the commandments.

7. Why did God introduce the commandments as he did (see Exodus 20:1-3)?

God introduced the commandments as he did to remind us that he is our loving Maker and Savior so that we are willing and glad to obey what he commands.

8. Evaluate the following statements:

- Let your conscience be your guide.

Sin has made our consciences unreliable; we cannot depend on conscience alone to tell us God’s will.

- When I want my someone to behave, I just lay down the law.

The law can only curb sinful behavior; it cannot motivate our children or any of us to joyfully obey God’s commandments.

- Obeying God’s commandments takes all the fun out of life.

Our sinful nature thinks that, but Christians who know God’s love find their enjoyment in serving him.