

THE LAW OF GOD



GOD'S LAW IS GOOD!

- The law shows what God is like—truthful, unselfish, life giving.
- It shows how He wants us to think and act.
- It applies to all people at all times.
- It doesn't change, because God doesn't change (Malachi 3:6).

GOD'S TOP TEN LIST

God made a big deal about the Ten Commandments. He wanted people to remember them.

- They're the only words God spoke with His own voice to an entire nation.
- He added impressive special effects: smoke, thunder, lightning, trumpet blasts.
- God engraved them with His finger on stone. (Try erasing that!)

The Ten Commandments show us basic principles of right and wrong that never change. They're still very important today.



DO WE HAVE TO FOLLOW ALL THESE RULES?

Two kinds of laws in the Bible applied to the Israelites, but not to us today. (See rocket illustration.)

- 1. Civil laws.** God was Israel's king, and He made the laws for their government. Today our governments aren't ruled directly by God.
- 2. Ceremonial laws.** The sanctuary services (like sacrificing animals and burning incense) helped people understand what Jesus would do as our Savior. After Jesus died, those ceremonies weren't needed anymore (Matthew 27:51).

Even though we don't follow these laws today, we can still learn from them.

FROM BEGINNING TO END

God's law has been around as long as He has. Even before God spoke the Ten Commandments, people knew it was wrong to steal, lie, and worship idols.

Jesus always obeyed God's law (Matthew 5:17). His death showed that God couldn't change His law to save us from the penalty of sin. Jesus had to pay that penalty.

At the end of time, an evil power will try to force people to break God's law (Revelation 13:12–15). But God's faithful people will "obey God's commands" (Revelation 14:12; see FUN-da-Mental #13).

"I DIDN'T DO IT!"

Sin is breaking God's law (1 John 3:4). But we can break God's law without doing anything! His law guides our thoughts and attitudes, not just our actions.

Murder breaks God's law, but so do anger and hate (Matthew 5:21, 22). Stealing is wrong, but so is coveting, which means wanting to take someone's stuff (Exodus 20:15, 17).

WAY TO LOVE

"God is love" (1 John 4:8), so He could have given us just one command: LOVE! But God knew we needed more detailed instructions than that, so He added more.

God's principles and rules help us understand how to love God and others. In the Ten Commandments, the first four commandments show how we love God, and the last six show how we love others. God gave many other commands that apply these principles to different situations.

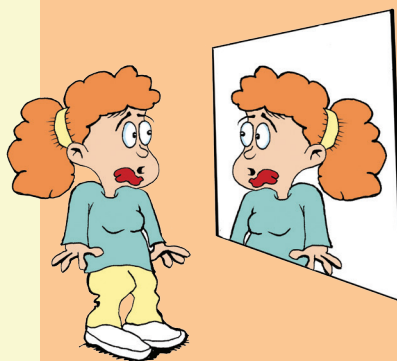


HOPE FOR LAW-BREAKERS

We don't earn the right to go to heaven by keeping God's law. Does that mean His law doesn't matter? No way (Romans 3:28; 31)!

Here's how God's law fits into His plan to save us from sin (see FUN-da-Mental #10).

- 1.** The law shows us what sin is (Romans 7:7).
- 2.** We can't obey the law perfectly (James 2:10). We're doomed to die. It's hopeless!
- 3.** We realize we need Jesus to save us (Galatians 3:24).
- 4.** We accept Jesus as our Savior.
- 5.** Jesus helps us do the impossible—obey Him! We obey God because we love Him (John 14:15; 1 John 3:6).
- 6.** God writes His law in our hearts. He changes us inside so we want to do what's right (Psalm 40:8; Hebrews 8:10).



I SEE IT ALL NOW

If you look in a mirror, you can see that you have spaghetti sauce on your chin. But the mirror can't clean your face. You need water for that.

God's law is like a mirror for us (James 1:23–25). It shows that we have dirt smudges of sin all over us. But the law can't clean it up. We need Jesus for that.

GIVE ME LIBERTY!

Some people think rules are a pain. They say, "I want to be free to do whatever I want!"

The funny thing is that people who follow God's law actually have more freedom than people who don't. "Everyone who sins is a slave of sin" (John 8:34). But people who obey God's law "walk in freedom" (Psalm 119:45, NLT).

God's law is like a fence around a playground. Inside the fence, you can play and have fun. Outside the fence you might get hit by a car or eaten by a tiger, depending on where you live. Obeying "the perfect law that gives freedom" protects us from the bad consequences of sin and brings us true happiness (James 1:25).

