

Q41. Wherein is the moral law summarily comprehended?

A41. **The moral law is summarily comprehended in the Ten Commandments.**

Matthew 19:17-19; Deuteronomy 10:4; Exodus 31:18

DQ1: How would you describe the Ten Commandments?

DQ2: How many commands are there in the Ten Commandments?

DQ3: How would you categorize the Ten Commandments?

DQ4: Do the Ten Commandments encompass all of the moral law?

Notes:

The Ten Commandments, while do not express all moral laws of God, are an excellent summary of all moral laws. And it would not be wrong to say that the Ten Commandments contain all of the meaning and intent of all moral laws.

The Ten Commandments are composed of ten separate commands. Why bother stating such an obvious fact. Who does not know it! Fair enough, but did you know that the Ten Commandments are in a particular order and that the order is actually important? The order certainly reflects the order of importance. Ultimately, as you will see, all Commandments flow out of the First Commandment. The order and structure of the Ten Commandments require us to understand them in certain ways. For example, often the Ten Commandments are viewed in two parts.

Here is the reason for understanding the Ten Commandments in two parts. We will study it more in depth in Q42 but the First through Fourth Commandments are distinguished from the Fifth through Tenth Commandments. The former is deemed to address the relationship between God and man and the latter the relationship among people. It is a great way of approaching the study of the Ten Commandments. This view is perhaps best known to us.

In this study, we will approach the understanding of the Ten Commandments in a slightly different way. This different way is to view the Ten Commandments in three parts. The First, Second and Third Commandments make up the first part (the "First Part"). The Fourth Commandment, by itself, makes up the second part (the "Second Part"). The Fifth, Sixth, Seventh, Eighth, Ninth and Tenth Commandments make up the third part (the "Third Part"). Sandwiched between the First Part and the Third Part, the Fourth Commandment seems to be the bridge between the two parts. It is often said that the First Part is the requirement to love God and the Third Part is the requirement to love the neighbor. How could man's love for God translate to man's love for his neighbor? The answer is found in the Fourth Commandment. Without the Sabbath's requirement of the Fourth Commandment, man could not find rest in God. Man, who is not rested in God, could not possibly love his neighbor. Indeed, the Sabbath Day works like a charging station whereby God's people are charged up to be able to love others. It would be wonderful to re-discover the amazing nature and placement of the Fourth Commandments through this study. No new theology is being introduced here. It is simply that this three-part approach may enhance our understanding the Ten Commandments.

It should come as no surprise to us that we are required to keep each and every one of the Ten Commandments perfectly. But, we also know that it is impossible to do so. Yet, God told Moses to teach and train Israel to obey them. How did God instruct Moses to go about making Israel keep the Ten Commandments? God's way of teaching was to ingrain the Word of God in the mind, heart and life of the Israelite. "Shema" was how Moses was to teach Israel to remain obedient to God. For the purpose of this brief discussion on Shema, it means an endless repetition of shouting or declaration of God's Word whereby Israel was to hear the Word of God in repetition. (Ref. Deuteronomy 6)

God also chose another way to teach God's people the true meaning of the Ten Commandments. This was done through the life, ministry and teachings of Jesus Christ. This is so because Jesus Christ perfectly obeyed God. In the process, Jesus Christ showed us how obedience and love go hand in hand.

Historically, the moral law became a chief means of expressing and establishing self-righteousness of the Jews. Those who did not know and experience the true Redeemer and Messiah, such as the Pharisees, Sadducees and Israel's elders, their focus was on how they might appear to other rather than living the true meaning of the moral law. They thought that the righteousness based upon their deeds would be pleasing to God. But, nothing could be further from the truth. They were sadly mistaken.

Jesus explained the Ten Commandments as a love command but, apparently, this was nothing new. Everyone, who knew the Old Testament Scriptures, knew of it. As you will read the passages below, you will learn that the Jews knew that the Ten Commandments were a love command.

Keeping the Ten Commandments will not lead to redemption. No one is saved by his or her own deeds, no matter how righteous they may appear to be to others. Therefore, to many who do not know Jesus Christ, the Ten Commandments are nothing but a huge hurdle to overcome in achieving their redemption. But, for those in Jesus Christ, the Ten Commandments are not a hurdle but a concrete expression of how we ought to express our love for God and others.

Did Jesus ignore the moral law of God? What did Jesus say about the laws of God? (Matthew 5:17)

How did Jesus summarize the moral law of God? (Mark 12:28-33)

What was the understanding of the scribes of Israel regarding the moral law? (Luke 10:25-28)

At this point, could we conclude that "we cannot live the Christian life without knowing the Ten Commandments"? Would Jesus agree with this conclusion? What do you think? Is this conclusion indeed correct? It is hoped that this study will help you know the correct answer.