

Galatians— Embracing Grace and Truth

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(Handout)

What does the Law Say and Do?

The Law gives moral instructions, covenant obligations, and spiritual formation—all centered on relationship with God and people.

The Ten Commandments form the moral core, prohibiting idolatry, misuse of God's name, murder, adultery, theft, and false witness, while commanding honor to parents and rest on the Sabbath. ([Exod 20:1–17](#)) The law demands love for God “with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might,” ([Deut 6:4–9](#)) and requires loving one's neighbor as oneself. ([Lev 19:18](#)) God's fundamental requirement involves fearing Him, walking in His ways, loving Him, and serving Him with complete devotion. ([Deut 10:12–13](#))

The law functioned as both guide and revealer. The psalmist celebrates the law as perfect, restoring the soul and making the simple wise, with precepts that rejoice the heart and enlighten the eyes. ([Ps 19:7–11](#)).

Yet through the law comes knowledge of sin—it cannot justify anyone through works alone. ([Rom 3:20](#)) The law was added because of transgressions, ordained through angels by a mediator, until Christ would come. ([Gal 3:19–25](#)) The law functioned as a tutor leading people to Christ, so they might be justified by faith. ([Gal 3:19–25](#)).

The law itself is holy, and the commandment is holy and righteous and good, ([Rom 7:4–12](#)) yet whoever keeps the whole law but stumbles in one point becomes guilty of all. ([James 2:10](#)) The law is good when used lawfully, ([1 Tim 1:8–11](#)) particularly in restraining lawlessness and sin.

Ultimately, all the law and the prophets depend on two commandments: loving God completely and loving one's neighbor as oneself. ([Matt 22:36–40](#)) The law reveals God's character and humanity's need for redemption, pointing toward fulfillment in Christ.