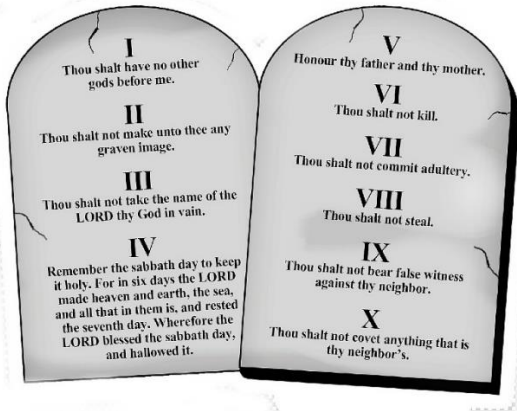


Love Does No Harm!

(Romans 13:8–10)



We are finally back in the book of Romans. Our last two messages on Romans addressed God’s plan for law and order in a civil society. The Scripture makes it known that we should obey just rulers who reward good and punish evil for they are God’s ministers. God is the one who has established authority structures in life for the well-being of all.

In the next passage that we will be examining today the Ten Commandments are brought up and their relationship to the Lord’s admonition to love one another. In Romans 13:10, it is written, “Love does no harm to its neighbor. Therefore, love is the fulfillment of the law.” This is a key passage to explain how the Ten Commandments relate to a just society and the Christian. It was not just a legal code given to Old Testament Israel. They are commands for Christians today!

There is a lot of confusion in our day as to the place of the Ten Commandments in the Christian life.

1) Some say that because Romans 6:14 states, “you are not under law, but under grace,” that the Ten Commandments are not for Christians today. It is argued that Moses received the Ten Commandments at Sinai for the nation of Israel, but a greater than Moses has come, Jesus Christ, and He has come with a different law, the law of Christ, which is love. The only problem with this is that our text in Romans cites the Ten Commandments and says that the Ten Commandments shows us (that is Christians) what it means to love other people.

How does one explain “not under law but under grace?” It is simple. We are saved not by keeping the Ten Commandments, because we have all failed in keeping them. Salvation is by God’s grace. We cannot save ourselves. We need God to rescue us from sin and sin’s penalty. God the Father sent His Son into the world. Becoming the man Jesus, He kept God’s law by living a sinless life and dying upon the cross to pay for our sins. Forgiveness is granted to all who look to Jesus alone to save them, and who embrace Him by faith as their Savior.

2) Others say that for a Christian to live under the Ten Commandments will result in a legalistic mindset that will lead to bondage, and that we have been freed from a do-this, don’t-do-that mindset, that we might be free to love other people.

Our text today corrects this erroneous thinking. It makes it known that the “thou shalt nots” of the Ten Commandments are given to show us what not to do, in order that we might genuinely love others. The “thou shalt nots” are there because “love does no harm to its neighbor,” (Romans 13:10).

Today, we are going to see the link between the Ten Commandments and love, and how they are for the Christian a way of showing what love is.

Our Text

Table 1. Romans 13:1–10

¹ Everyone must submit himself to the governing authorities, for there is no authority except that which God has established. The authorities that exist have been established by God.	Everyone must submit to authorities They have been established by God.
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Table 1. Continued.

<p>² Consequently, he who rebels against the authority is rebelling against what God has instituted, and those who do so will bring judgment on themselves. ³ For rulers hold no terror for those who do right, but for those who do wrong. Do you want to be free from fear of the one in authority? Then do what is right and he will commend you. ⁴ For he is God's servant to do you good. But if you do wrong, be afraid, for he does not bear the sword for nothing. He is God's servant, an agent of wrath to bring punishment on the wrongdoer. ⁵ Therefore, it is necessary to submit to the authorities, not only because of possible punishment but also because of conscience.</p>	<p>If you rebel against the authority Then you rebel against God</p> <p>The one in authority is God's servant</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • He rewards the good • He punishes the bad <p>Submit to authorities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To avoid punishment • To have a good conscience
<p>⁶ This is also why you pay taxes, for the authorities are God's servants, who give their full time to governing. ⁷ Give everyone what you owe him: If you owe taxes, pay taxes; if revenue, then revenue; if respect, then respect; if honor, then honor.</p>	<p>A link</p> <p>Give everyone what you owe them</p>
<p>⁸ Let no debt remain outstanding, except the continuing debt to love one another, for he who loves his fellowman has fulfilled the law.</p> <p>⁹ The commandments, "Do not commit adultery," "Do not murder," "Do not steal," "Do not covet," and whatever other commandment there may be, are summed up in this one rule: "Love your neighbor as yourself."</p> <p>¹⁰ Love does no harm to its neighbor. Therefore love is the fulfillment of the law.</p>	<p><i>Today's text (outlined text)</i></p> <p>If you love you fulfill the law</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 10 Commandments • Love does no harm <p>Love is the fulfillment of the law</p>

Listen to what Jesus had to say

³⁴ Hearing that Jesus had silenced the Sadducees, the Pharisees got together. ³⁵ One of them, an expert in the law, tested him with this question: ³⁶ "Teacher, which is the greatest commandment in the Law?"

³⁷ Jesus replied: " **'Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.'** ³⁸ This is the first and greatest commandment. ³⁹ And the second is like it: **'Love your neighbor as yourself.'** ⁴⁰ All the Law and the Prophets hang on these two commandments." (Matthew 22:34-40)

Table 2. The Ten Commandments as Loving God and Loving Man (Exodus 20:1-17, Deuteronomy 5:6-21)

Loving God	Loving Man
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Do not have other Gods 2. Do not make an idol (a graven image) 3. Do not misuse God's name (take it in vain) 4. Remember to keep the Sabbath (worship) 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 5. Honor your father and mother 6. Do not murder 7. Do not commit adultery 8. Do not steal 9. Do not tell a lie about your neighbor 10. Do not covet

Sample command # 7, Do not commit adultery – How the command and love intertwine

Why is it that a man should not commit adultery? It is because you will harm your wife. It is because you will harm the other woman. In an adulterous act between a man and a woman, there is no concern about the guilt he will bring into her life, the harm he will inflict upon her marriage, and the damage that he will do to not only her; but, also to her husband, and to her children. Such a one may speak words of love to a woman whose “love tank” is low, but it is only words. He does not genuinely care for her. His selfish actions betray what love entails, for love does no harm. Love does not harm your wife and kids. Love does not harm the other woman by defiling her conscience, her relationships with her spouse, her children, her parents, and her friends, in effect, all those in her world.

Can you see it? The “thou shalt not” of Scripture, set the boundaries, so that we do not violate the royal law of love. Jesus takes the prohibitions of the Ten Commandments one step further. In the Sermon on the Mount, He goes beyond the act of adultery, to thoughts of adultery in one’s mind. If you think pornography is bad, what it leads to is worse, the fantasizing of sexual immorality. Why is that so bad? It is not just thinking stuff in your mind? Does it really harm anyone? Here is what is bad about it. It is an adulterous thought, and in it you are setting yourself up for a fall.

Lascivious thoughts come easy to men. We come wired this way. We are all such sinners in this area. Even a Bible hero like David fell in this area. How do you nip this temptation in the bud? It is simple. Ask yourself the following questions? Do I want to hurt my wife? Do I want to hurt my kids? Let us get practical. If you find your mind is in the gutter, ask yourself if you would you really like to do this, knowing how much it would hurt your wife, and the reproach it will bring to Christ? That kind of question will take the wind right out of your sail, and you will not be cruising in that thought pattern. It will rain on your parade. If you genuinely love your wife and your kids, it will make it easier to harken to the command, “Do not commit adultery, “ not only the act of adultery, but the private thoughts of adultery.

Women are wired for relationships. They want someone who cherishes them, and who values them as a person. They want a man who carves out time for them. They want to be loved. When their love tank is empty, they are vulnerable. Over the years as a pastor, I have gotten more flak from women, when I pointed out in a sermon that the romance that was portrayed at the cinema, in such movies as *Out of Africa*, and *Titanic* was pure adultery. When I was growing up, there was a popular song, whose lyrics went like this, “What the world needs now, is love sweet love . . .” Those words are so true! Love is so important to all of us. And if love is found in the right places, it would not be sought in the wrong places!

I have been a pastor for a long time. I have seen people get caught in the net of adultery and have helped them get untangled. I have seen the horrific wounds of betrayal healed, and love blossom once again. Those I have encountered in this area, are not the wicked seductresses of Hollywood movies, but common ordinary people, men and women, who failed to guard their hearts, and who failed in loving those closest to them. I have just talked about one of the Ten Commandments. Do you see it? The Ten Commandments show us how to love! They are not nit-picky legalistic regulations. They let us know what it is to love God and others with a broad stroke. Christian, do you want to know what love is? Look at the Ten Commandments! You honor your parents. You do not murder. You do not commit adultery. You do not steal. You do not tell a lie about another person

God’s ways are the best ways, because they come from a loving God to show us how to love others!

The commandment and love mixture of 1 John, read 1 John 1: 8–2:11 [page 1183 in pew Bible]

Summary God’s law shows us how to love! It shows us the right way to live. Regrettably, we fall short. We are saved by grace not by law-keeping (trying to be good enough), because we are all sinners in need of a Savior. We are by nature, not loving but selfish. However, God in love, sent his Son (Jesus) to be our Savior.