

Biblical Theology by Dr. Chuck Baynard

Lesson 46 (HCLD 44)¹

Preparation: Begin and end each study time with prayer. Pay particular attention to the background reading and pray over each passage asking God to reveal Himself to you.

Background Reading: Read all the Scripture verses in footnote # 1 & 2.

Question: What are the duties required in the tenth commandment and what sins are forbidden in the tenth commandment?

Answer: The duties required in the tenth commandment are, such a full contentment with our own condition,[1] and such a charitable frame of the whole soul toward our neighbor, as that all our inward motions and affections touching him, tend unto, and further all that good which is his.[2] The sins forbidden in the tenth commandment are, discontentment with our own estate;[3] envying [4] and grieving at the good of our neighbor,[5] together with all inordinate motions and affections to anything that is his.[6]²

I find the duties and sins connected to the tenth so closely interwoven I have chosen to treat these questions as one here. The duties and avoidance of the sins involved are so contrary to the nature of the flesh that absolutely none will be able to obey this commandment apart from the new heart created in the new birth by the Holy Spirit worked in the heart of the elect. Friends this commandment will drive us to Christ constantly and continuously.

I see here the application of Christ's summary of all in the two commandments of love He gave as being a summary of all the law and prophets. Nothing short of the unconditional love given of God can maintain this attitude of life among men. It is also here that I see the result of our understanding and embracing the beautiful flower of God we have come to know as the TULIP. While not explicitly spoken of

¹ The Heidelberg Catechism, Lord's Day 44

Q113: What does the tenth Commandment require?

A113: That not even the least inclination or thought against any commandment of God ever enter our heart, but that with our whole heart we continually hate all sin and take pleasure in all righteousness.[1]

1. Rom. 7:7-8; Prov. 4:23; James 1:14-15; Matt. 15:11, 19-20

Q114: Can those who are converted to God keep these Commandments perfectly?

A114: No, but even the holiest men, while in this life, have only a small beginning of such obedience,[1] yet so that with earnest purpose they begin to live not only according to some, but according to all the Commandments of God.[2]

1. I John 1:8-10; Rom. 7:14-15; Eccl. 7:20

2. Rom. 7:22; James 2:10-11; Job 9:2-3; Psa. 19:13

Q115: Why then does God so strictly enjoin the Ten Commandments upon us, since in this life no one can keep them?

A115: First, that as long as we live we may learn more and more to know our sinful nature,[1] and so the more earnestly seek forgiveness of sins and righteousness in Christ;[2] second, that without ceasing we diligently ask God for the grace of the Holy Spirit, that we be renewed more and more after the image of God, until we attain the goal of perfection after this life.[3]

1. I John 1:9; Psa. 32:5

2. Rom. 7:24-25

3. I Cor. 9:24-25; Phil. 3:12-14; Matt. 5:6; Psa. 51:12

²

1. Heb. 13:5; I Tim. 6:6

2. Job 31:29; Psa. 122:79; I Tim. 1:5; Est. 10:3; I Cor. 13:4-7

3. I Kings 21:4; Est. 5:13; I Cor. 10:10

4. Gal. 5:26; James 3:14, 16

5. Psa. 122:9-10; Neh. 2:10

6. Rom. 7:7-8; Rom. 13:9; Col. 3:5; Deut. 5:21

in the Scripture or the work of the Westminster divines in these questions, it is here that this flower is made manifest in its application.

As man attempts to obey this commandment he will immediately be faced with his own fallen nature and petal one will come to mind instantly to remind Him his only hope lies in the perfect obedience of his Lord and Master, Jesus Christ. Man cannot of self take the first faltering step in obedience to this commandment.

It is a truth that just as surely as man recognizes his own inability because of total depravity, he too will know that anything short of unconditional election will not suffice. He will find his inability so complete in all faculties that there is no doubt he has and will not earn any merit apart from God's unconditional electing love.

Observation of the inability of self and others to even to begin this walk in sanctification will make manifest that surely the atonement was not universal or to all the world. As we watch self and others and the unmerited love of God is made visible, it will be clear that not all have this unnatural ability to obey this most important commandment for the brotherhood of man to live in the same harmony that exists within the Godhead. The inability points to the fact there are those who never attempt to walk as God commands. This combined with the verses of Scripture that point to Hell having a human population leaves absolutely no doubt the atonement is indeed limited. A universal atonement would mean there are no souls in hell, for the choice as with all things lies with the Creator, not the created.

When we take the commandment of God to examine self, which will be made manifest in trying to walk this path of contentment we rapidly find that irresistible grace must be true. We must continually wrestle with self even as Paul notes in Romans 7:15ff that there is a constant strife whereby he concludes that "So then with the mind I myself serve the law of God; but with the flesh the law of sin." Our very nature in the flesh then being evil, anything less than the irresistible will of God to bring the elect to salvation will not enable us to overcome the flesh and walk as God commands. While this is one of the points of classic Calvinism the Reformed church world seems to be willing to concede, this should not be so. The fourth petal is essential to the whole of this beautiful flower from God. Indeed, as so often noted we can begin with any petal and even the sin clouded mind of man will admit the other four will flow of necessity. As with all of the five points, they should be held and defended rigorously, for they are the truth of God.

Finally, can any doubt the truth of the fifth petal. All being of God and so decreed from the foundations of the earth, man has nothing to do with his salvation, and nothing to do with the maintenance thereof, all being of grace, by faith, and that the gift of God. No need to here rehash all the verses concerning the five classic points of Calvinism. This final petal stands in the light of the completed work of Christ, and if it could be lost, that work is not completed and we sacrifice anew our Lord by our continuing sins.

Places like this where all of the glory of God is revealed in the TULIP without one direct word commending this doctrine to us is why I have chosen to try and reveal to all the beauty of this flower that flows so naturally and completely from God's Word. When without distorting a single verse of God's Holy Word, from such a place as this commandment we find the whole of the flower, surely none could deny that the Reformed faith is the Biblical faith. Yet we know some do deny these essential truths. Because they are the very heart of the Bible, these issues were worth embracing the flames so to speak by our forefathers. How is it we then so lightly esteem these great truths today? I note that Christ said His kingdom was not of this world, lest His disciples fight for Him. Thus, while these truths are to be maintained by the church, it is not with the attitude of an adversary we approach our fellow travelers in this world, but one that exhibits the love of God whereby all men would see the good works of the Father in us and glorify Him. This then does not call for more warriors to man the battle lines. This commandment lifts Christ and Him crucified, that His disciples would boldly confront the world with His truth, in love. It is from this commandment we find the strength to love, that which is unlovable, even as Christ loved us and died for us. Perhaps with this knowledge we can understand Paul saying "I am all things to all people that by all means some might be saved." None listens to an avowed enemy, but who can resist at least the hearing of the admonition of a friend? Thus, the salvation of man by grace through faith continues until our Lord returns. [So, then, faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God." (Romans 10:17).

Another issue that must be touched on here in my opinion is that of self-examination. We cannot approach the table of the Lord without such examination and apart from obedience to this commandment surely profane that sacrament in coming not for benefit but our own damnation. The envy and strife so much a part of us will not be discerned lest we remember and apply this to our hearts as we bow before God in preparation to partake of the body and blood of our Lord in commemoration of His completed work for us. Envy will spread as a cancer and spoil the whole life witness if not brought under the control of the Holy Spirit within, and that most often in our continuing spiritual war with our own flesh. Even here we would be left defenseless to the evil of the flesh were it not for another truth that belongs to the elect alone, that of Romans 8:35-39. Also, when we bow before God in confession, it is not all of the flesh upon which we depend, but rather, "Likewise, the Spirit also helps our infirmities; for we know not what we should pray for as we ought; but the Spirit itself makes intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered. And he that searches the hearts knows the mind of the Spirit, because he makes intercession for the saints according to the will of God." (Romans 8:26-27).

The spiritual war we are so constantly engaged in is not as the aide de camp to the heavenly angels, but in the mind of man. The cartoon illustration of a devil sitting on the shoulder whispering temptations in the ear of the believer is all too true. The error is there is not an angel on the other shoulder giving good counsel, but rather the Spirit within as intercessor with God the Father, and bearing witness with our spirit that we might move in the will of God.

The answer lies in the constant daily study of God's Holy Word. We must become so steeped in this Word that it flows naturally in our casual conversation. Not as rote memory, but from the heart. The heart of man is most corrupt and deceitful, but filled with God's divine Word, it will control the mind, and it is there Satan wages war against the saints of God. Piety, a necessary ingredient in the life of the saint to me falls into this very trap of Satan when it is held within the person so that they speak Bible words, and are careful in the way of a Pharisee to appear righteous, rather than emulating our Lord and so living a life of love and contentment that harbors no envy, emotion, or affection for their fellow man except for their good. The Puritan definition of piety was, Piety: Consists in a firm belief and in right conceptions of the being; perfections, and providence of God." Or, piety understands all is of God and His grace. I have spoken before of the deep understanding of grace in the Puritan mind and way of life. Grace drives even the most stubborn to his knees in wonder at the awesome love of God bestowed.

While surely we all must hold the first table high before all we think, say, or do in the name of Christ, and while there is no subordination as such in the second table of the law, to me it is clear that if we properly understand and apply this last of the commandments, the first table is where it should be, and adherence to all of the second becomes second nature, replacing the natural instincts of the creature, with the will of the Creator.

Suggested Sermon Outline

What is required in the Tenth Commandment?

That there should never enter our heart even the least inclination or thought contrary to any commandment of God, but that we should always hate sin with our whole heart and find satisfaction and joy in all righteousness.

But can those who are converted to God keep these commandments perfectly?

No, for even the holiest of them make only a small beginning in obedience in this life. Nevertheless, they begin with serious purpose to conform not only to some, but to all the commandments of God.

Why then, does God have the Ten Commandments preached so strictly since no one can keep them in this life?

First, that all our life long we may become increasingly aware of our sinfulness, and therefore more eagerly seek forgiveness of sins and righteousness in Christ. Second, that we may constantly and diligently pray to God for the grace of the Holy Spirit, so that more and more we may be renewed in the image of God until we attain the goal of full perfection after this life.

I. God's Commandments Aren't the Problem

A. The Ten Commandments simply expose the sin problem. What shall we say then? Is the law sin? God forbid. Nay, I had not known sin, but by the law: for I had not known lust, except the law had said, Thou shalt not covet. (Romans 7:7)

B. Through the revelation of God's mind and will, it becomes possible to understand reality as actually exists. The law of the LORD is perfect, converting the soul: the testimony of the LORD is sure, making wise the simple. The statutes of the LORD are right, rejoicing the heart: the commandment of the LORD is pure, enlightening the eyes. The fear of the LORD is clean, enduring for ever: the judgments of the LORD are true and righteous altogether. More to be desired are they than gold, yea, than much fine gold: sweeter also than honey and the honeycomb. Moreover by them is thy servant warned: and in keeping of them there is great reward. Who can understand his errors? Cleanse Thou Me from Secret Faults. (Psalm 19:7-12)

II. The Commandments Summon Believers to God, His Grace, and a Life of Holiness

A. Only self-deception suggests genuine holiness in this life. If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. (1 John 1:8)

B. The Law of God exposes the incredible gap between divine standard and human practice. For we know that the law is spiritual: but I am carnal, sold under sin. (Romans 7:14)

C. However, those who know the Ten Commandments begin to desire to see them in practice. For I delight in the law of God after the inward man: (Romans 7:22)

D. Believers begin to see the full scope of God's holiness. For whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all. (James 2:10)

III. The Commandments Summon to a Realistic Life

A. As we become aware of sin we seek forgiveness and righteousness in Christ and nothing else. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. (1 John 1:9)

B. When we know what sin and forgiveness are we want forgiveness on God's terms. I acknowledged my sin unto thee, and mine iniquity have I not hid. I said, I will confess my transgressions unto the LORD; and thou forgavest the iniquity of my sin. Selah. (Psalm 32:5)

C. Right understanding of the Law of God drives a believer to the grace of Jesus. Now we know that what things soever the law saith, it saith to them who are under the law: that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God. (Romans 3:19) O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death? I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord. So then with the mind I myself serve the law of God; but with the flesh the law of sin. (Romans 7:24-25)

D. Knowing the reality of sin and the disaster it brings, believers desire escape to sin and its consequences. Know ye not that they which run in a race run all, but one receiveth the prize? So run, that ye may obtain. (1 Corinthians 9:24)

E. Contentment in Jesus is the great goal of the educated life. Not as though I had already attained, either were already perfect: but I follow after, if that I may apprehend that for which also I am apprehended of Christ Jesus. Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended: but this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus. (Philippians 3:12-14)

Whether therefore ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God. (1 Corinthians 10:31)