

FAMILY WORSHIP HELPS

WEEK 40

THIS WEEK'S FOCUS

QUESTION 40: *What did God at first reveal to man for the rule of his obedience?*

ANSWER: The rule which God at first revealed to man for his obedience, was the moral law.

MONDAY

Praise: Sing Psalm 19B

Scripture: Read Romans 2:14-16

Key Thought: *The moral law of God is written in the hearts of men.*

Questions:

- ☞ Do all men have a general sense of what is right and wrong?
- ☞ What does Paul call this moral sense? How does it work?
- ☞ How long have men had the law written in their hearts?
- ☞ Is the moral law in the hearts of all men sufficient to guide them?

Prayer

Notes: This week we will be discussing the moral law of God as it was first revealed to man. There are some who maintain that the Law of God was not given until Moses received the Ten Commandments on Mount Sinai. This position is in error, as we will see. God has never left His creatures without a standard against which to measure right and wrong. In fact, Paul speaks of the fact that even the Gentiles, who never received the Ten Commandments, show by their actions that they have an inner sense of right and wrong that reflects the written law of God. This moral sense is referred to by Paul as the conscience, which either accuses or excuses the Gentiles inwardly. This inner conviction of right and wrong has been in the heart of man from the beginning. The Fall did not utterly obliterate the image of God from His creatures. The law of God remains written on every heart as a testimony against sin and corruption. This inner testimony, however, is not sufficient to guide men in righteousness because sin has corrupted them so that even when unbelievers do the right things, they do them for the wrong reasons. God's moral law does not remain in the hearts of men so that they will do the right things, but so that they will see that they are bent upon doing the wrong things by nature, and turn to Christ for mercy and redemption.

TUESDAY

Praise: Sing Psalm 19B •

Scripture: Read Romans 5:12-13

Key Thought: *Without a moral law there could be no consciousness of sin.*

Questions:

- ☞ How many of Adam's children were sinners?
- ☞ How did they know they were sinners?
- ☞ What does Paul mean: "Sin is not imputed where there is no law"?
- ☞ What conclusion can we draw from the fact that specific sins were imputed to men before the time of Moses?

Prayer

Notes: Remind your children that we are discussing the way that God revealed His will to men before He gave the Ten Commandments to Moses. There are some who insist that the Law did not exist before God inscribed it on the tablets of stone at Mount Sinai, but this view is contrary to the plain teaching of Scripture. In today's passage we have a straightforward assertion from Paul that the very existence of sin in the world prior to the giving of the Law through Moses proves that the Law existed from the beginning. Paul's point is simple: Sin cannot be identified apart from the Law. The Law is a standard through which man is seen to fall far short of God's perfect holiness. Without a ruler, we would not know what an "inch" is. Likewise, without the Law, we would not be able to identify a specific sin. We can therefore conclude that since men were counted guilty of particular sins before the days of Moses, the moral law must have been revealed in some way in order to expose their sins. Challenge your children to consider how the moral law in their hearts witnesses against their own transgressions. Pray together for mercy and grace leading to increasing faithfulness and obedience from the heart.

 WEDNESDAY

Praise: Sing Psalm 19B

Scripture: Read Genesis 4:1-11; 20:1-9; 26:4-5; 30:32-33

Key Thought: *The moral law can be clearly seen before Moses.*

Questions:

- ☞ What commandment(s) of the moral law did Cain break?
- ☞ What commandment(s) of the moral law did Abraham break?
- ☞ What commandment of the moral law did Jacob refer to?
- ☞ Are these laws any different from those given to Moses?
- ☞ Why was the moral law necessary from the beginning?

Prayer

Notes: The passages from Genesis that you read today provide examples of the fact that the moral law of God was revealed to men long before the Ten Com-

mandments were given on Mount Sinai. The sins of Cain were covetousness and murder, breaches of what later became known as the 10th and 6th commandments. In Abraham's interactions with Abimelech, we see an acknowledgment that adultery (the 7th commandment) and lying (the 9th commandment) were sins against God. In Jacob's promise to Laban we find a recognition of the fact that stealing another man's property was sin, which later finds expression in the 8th commandment. These things did not begin to be wrong when Moses came down from the mountain with the tablets of stone. Nor were the people whom God had created ignorant of His holy requirements before the time of Moses. In fact, the examples in our passages highlight an important function of the moral law that was necessary from the very beginning. In summarizing the function of God's law, Reformed scholars have historically spoken of "the three uses of the law." The first use of the Law, sometimes called its political use, is to restrain the ungodly behavior of sinful men in society. This aspect of the function of the Law includes the fear of punishment for transgressing against God's holy standards. In all of the cases we read in Genesis, we can see that consciousness of the just penalty for transgressing the moral law acted as a deterrent and restraint to wicked actions. This function of the Law reveals the horrible depravity of man, who must be restrained by the threat of punishment or else he would pursue greater and greater wickedness. Challenge your children to examine their own hearts in this light, confessing their sins before God as He reveals them.



THURSDAY



Praise: Sing Psalm 19B

Scripture: Read Romans 3:9-28; 7:7

Key Thought: *The function of the moral law is to reveal sin.*

Questions:

- ☞ What specific characteristics of men are revealed in Romans 3:10-18?
- ☞ To whom do these things apply? How do they apply to you?
- ☞ How do we come to know that we are lost sinners?
- ☞ Have you seen yourself as a filthy sinner in need of Christ?

Prayer

Notes: The traditional second use of the Law, sometimes called its pedagogic use, is in providing conviction of sin and creating a sense of spiritual need in the sinner. The Law thus acts as a tutor to bring us to Christ (Gal. 3:19-24). In discussing how the Law reveals that every man is guilty before God, Paul gives a description of the depravity of all men (Rom. 3:10-18). Discuss each of his statements with your children, helping them to see the great corruption of the human heart and to recognize that they are reading a description of themselves in their natural state apart from Christ. Explain to them how the Law

reveals to us that we are sinners in need of salvation (Rom. 7:7) and pray with them that the consciousness of sin would lead them as a tutor to Christ for salvation.



FRIDAY



Praise: Sing Psalm 19B

Scripture: Read Numbers 15:38-41; John 14:15

Key Thought: *The moral law is a rule for life to believers.*

Questions:

- ☞ What was the purpose of the blue tassel God commanded?
- ☞ Is there a connection between obeying God's commandments and holiness?
- ☞ When a person comes to know God, is he no longer expected to follow God's commands?

Prayer

Notes: The third use of the Law, sometimes called its didactic use, is in supplying a rule of life for believers. It is through the Law that we understand the nature and character of God, since the Law is rooted in His holiness. To the natural man, the Law stands as a barrier to complete depravity, since fear of punishment restrains him. To those called by God's grace, the Law reveals sin deep within the heart by measuring us against the standard of God's pure holiness. By God's grace, we see how far short we fall of His glory and flee to Christ for redemption. After conversion, the Law is not discarded, but becomes the standard for our sanctification. It continues to show us God's perfect holiness, which is the goal toward which we are called in Christ. Jesus does not say, "If you love me, you need not keep my commandments," but rather, "If you love me, you will keep my commandments." The Law of God, like the blue tassels on the fringe of the Israelites' garments, constantly reminds us of our natural tendencies, and holds before us a standard of righteousness which we strive to conform to in God's grace. Challenge your children to make the study of God's Law their great delight and to see it, not as a means of gaining God's favor, but as a guide for being conformed to the image of Christ.



Note: Only five lessons per week are included. You are encouraged to lead your family in worship seven days a week. On weekends, you may want to review or build upon the lessons from the previous week, discuss the sermon from Sunday morning, or work on questions from the Catechism or memory verses. These lesson suggestions are intended to provide a simple framework for parents to build upon. You are not limited to this content. The habit of morning and evening family worship is the biblical ideal. We hope you can use these lessons as a starting point for the development of a blessed practice of family worship in your home.