



The Greatest Commandments and the Law

God's Reasons Why

The Purpose of the Law

- God gave the Law
 - as a school-master/guardian (Galatians 3:23-29),
 - to teach the people of Israel how to be His people, how to be a kingdom of priests (Exodus 19:6),
 - and to be a blessing to all nations (Genesis 12:3),
 - leading the people eventually to faith in/of Christ, through whom God's story for Israel ultimately would be fulfilled.
- The Law taught the people how to love God and how to love their neighbors.
- We may not be under Mosaic law as Christians today, but it does us good to know the Law because it helps us know the heart of God and where our hearts should be.
 - If God is Love, then to know and love God is to know and love "Love".



Why follow the Law?

- The Law was not arbitrarily or blindly followed; God gave reasons why the people were to follow the Law.
 - “I am the LORD your God who brought you out of the land Egypt, out of the house of slavery.”
 - “Remember that you were a slave in the land of Egypt”
 - “For you were sojourners in the land of Egypt”
- At first glance, why do you think God stated these as reasons to follow the Law?



Do _____ because you “remember that you were a slave in the land of Egypt.”

Commandment	Reference
Observe the Sabbath	Deuteronomy 5:12-15
Observe the Feasts	Deuteronomy 16:1-12
Lend to the poor; release debts and release slaves in the Sabbatical year	Deuteronomy 15:1-18
Not pervert justice for the sojourner, fatherless, or widow	Deuteronomy 24:18
Not entirely glean/strip your fields; care for the poor	Deuteronomy 24:19-22
Teach your children the meaning of the commandments	Deuteronomy 6:20-25

How would the people of Israel having been slaves in Egypt serve as reason for them to follow these laws?

Do _____ because you “were sojourners/strangers in the land of Egypt.”

Commandment	Reference
Not wrong a sojourner or oppress him, for you know the heart of a sojourner...	Exodus 22:21; 23:9
Treat the sojourner as native among you and... love him as yourself.	Leviticus 19:34
<i>(God is not partial... He executes justice for the fatherless and widow, and loves the sojourner...)</i> Love the sojourner, therefore...	Deuteronomy 10:17-19

How would the people of Israel having been sojourners in Egypt have served as reason to follow these laws?

Bringing “the why” forward to today

- We are not under the Mosaic Law, but “the why” of the Law still has meaning and utility today.
 - Does God still execute justice for the fatherless and widow (the poor)? Does God still love the sojourner?
 - Consider your own attitudes and behaviors toward the poor, widows, orphans, and sojourners/strangers/foreigners.
 - How do they reflect (or not) the love and justice of God as seen in the Mosaic Law? As seen in the teachings of Jesus?
 - ‘For I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me, I was naked and you clothed me, I was sick and you visited me, I was in prison and you came to me.’ (Matthew 25:35-36)

Bringing “the why” forward to today

- In what ways were we once slaves? Dependent on others for our needs?
 - How should our once having been slaves affect the way we treat others in a similar state?
 - How might a recognition that we are dependent on God for our needs affect the way we think about and treat the poor?
- Were all our ancestors natives of this land?
 - How can knowledge of our ancestors’ history as sojourners inform our attitudes and behaviors toward the sojourners of today? Do we “know the heart of the sojourner”?
 - How might our understanding of our citizenship being in heaven (Phil. 3:17-21) inform our attitudes and behaviors toward sojourners?