

The Universal Forms of Love, I

Lord, open our eyes that we may behold the wonder of Your Law. By Your Spirit, create in us the desire for those things which You desire, especially loving kindness, justice, and righteousness on the earth. Lead us forth in your truth and teach us, for You are our God and our hope is in You. In the name of Jesus, amen.

This session we will start on the universal norms of love. In my book, I begin with an epigraph that contrasts pretty starkly the two positions with respect to these commandments. Bernard Haring is a contemporary Roman Catholic theologian. He writes, “In the love for which Christ has freed us, we realize that the binding moral norms express the very structure of the human person.” In other words, God’s commands fit human nature; they are for our good. That is an appropriate way of thinking about natural law. You notice he relates it to the love of Christ. The title of his book is *Free and Faithful in Christ*, so he is talking about Christian ethics, but he then makes this wonderful statement that “the binding moral norms express the very structure of the human person.” It is similar to a statement that I ran across in Tyndale: “The Law gives outward form to the inward goodness bestowed by the Holy Spirit.” I think that is what we are after. The Law gives outward form to the inward goodness bestowed by the Holy Spirit. We may never forget the work of the Holy Spirit as that root of virtue as we come to God’s commandments.

Now, *The Humanist Alternative*—that is the very significant title of Paul Kurtz’s book—is an alternative to the Judeo-Christian tradition. “The traditional supernaturalistic moral commandments are especially repressive of our human needs. They are immoral insofar as they foster illusions about human destiny and suppress vital inclinations.” Well, I do not think you could have a more stark contrast with respect to the commandments. It explains why some people, not all, but why some people would object to the posting of the Ten Commandments. If they regard them as repressive of human needs, then obviously that is not something that is desirable to be posted in a public classroom. We will talk about that particular issue after we have taken a look at the Ten Commandments in the church and seen some of this history. At the end of the excursus, I talk about the Ten Commandments in Medieval and Reformation society, and then we will apply that to our own day. But you see the contrast. Although you begin to think, which of the Ten Commandments are repressive of human needs? “You shall not kill.” Is that repressive of human needs? “You shall not steal,” well. “You shall not bear false witness.” I mean, really. What are the commandments that are repressive of human need? Well, I think it is largely the seventh commandment in the area of sexuality. That is the area where you get this fault, that vital inclinations are being suppressed by the supernaturalistic commandment.

I begin this section on the universal forms of love with a study of the Ten Commandments. And my proposition is this: the Ten Commandments are the comprehensive summary of the will of God for human beings created in His image. The Ten Commandments are the comprehensive summary of the will of God for human beings created in His image and thus embody the universal standards of moral practice. Now we saw last time, looking biblically at the revelation of the will of God, that love is the summary of the will of God in the twofold commandment to love God with all our heart and to love our neighbor as ourselves. And love is embodied in the practices of justice, mercy, and fidelity. What I am going to propose for our argument concerns love as it is embodied in the practices preeminently of justice, mercy, and fidelity. These primary forms of love are further specified in terms of the Ten Commandments. And that becomes then the comprehensive summary of the universal norms of love in the practice of justice, mercy, and fidelity. I think that we should look at the scriptural teaching of the

will of God in light of this pattern of development. And the Ten Commandments have a particular place in the formation of our understanding of what God is calling us to be and especially to do.

The first point to notice about the Ten Commandments is their setting in the history of redemption. I am going to argue that they are the comprehensive summary of the will of God for human beings as such, but we should notice that they are given in the context of the history of redemption. Exodus 20:1-2 says, "And God spoke all these words, saying, 'I am the Lord your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage.'" We used to speak of that as the preface to the Ten Commandments. It is more common now to speak of it as the prologue to the Ten Commandments, because it is patterned after the cultural form of the suzerain treaty, in which the treaty began with the suzerain lord giving what he had done for the vassal and then stipulating the allegiance that was expected in return. And you have that same form here. So the prologue to the commandments identifies God in His authority and in His redemptive activity.

Look back at Exodus 2:23-24. "Now it came about in the course of those many days that the king of Egypt died, and the sons of Israel sighed because of their bondage and they cried out. And their cry for help because of the bondage rose up to God. So God heard their groaning, and God remembered His covenant with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob." The prologue to the Ten Commandments connects it with God's redemptive activity in delivering His people from bondage in Egypt. Exodus 2 further places that redemptive activity in the context of God's covenant with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, so that God's redemptive activity in the Exodus is in pursuance of His covenant of grace that He made with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. And then it becomes, as Paul says in Galatians, an addendum to that covenant. But it is in pursuit of His redemptive purpose in fulfillment of the covenant with Abraham that the Lord speaks all these words.

Look at Exodus 19:3-6. "And Moses went up to God and the Lord called to him from the mountain, saying, 'Thus you shall say to the house of Jacob, and tell the sons of Israel: You yourselves have seen what I did to the Egyptians, and how I bore you on eagles' wings and brought you to myself. Now then, if you will indeed obey my voice and keep my covenant, then you shall be my own possession among all peoples, for all the earth is mine; and you shall be to me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation. These are the words you shall speak to the sons of Israel.'" There is the rehearsal of what God has done and how tenderly He has brought His people to Himself, His purpose being that they should be a royal priesthood, a holy nation, and a people showing forth the excellencies of Him who called them out of darkness into His marvelous light.

There is a very moving passage in Calvin, in his *Sermons on the Ten Commandments*, on the condescension of God in entering into covenant with His people. Let me read you this brief paragraph. "It pleases God by His infinite goodness to enter into a common treaty. He mutually binds Himself to us without having to do so, enumerates that treaty article by article, chooses to be our Father and Savior, receives us as His flock and His inheritance. It is as if God said, 'I set aside my right. I come here to present myself to you as Your Guide and Savior. I want to govern you. You are like my little family. And if you are satisfied with my Word, I will be your King. Besides, the purpose is not to take anything from you, rather I procure your well-being and your salvation.'" That is John Calvin in *Sermons on the Ten Commandments*. I think that he captures the thrust of God's expression in condescending to enter into a covenant with His people.

In Exodus 24:3-8, we have a sequel that is important to understand.

Then Moses came and recounted to the people all the words of the Lord and all the ordinances. And all the people answered with one voice and said, "All the words which the Lord has spoken we will do." And Moses wrote down all the words of the Lord. And then he arose early in the morning and built an altar at the foot of the mountain, with twelve pillars, for the twelve tribes of Israel. And he sent young men of the sons of Israel, and they offered burnt offerings and sacrificed young bulls as peace offerings to the Lord. And Moses took half the blood and put it in basins, and the other half of the blood he sprinkled on the altar. Then he took the Book of the Covenant and read it in the hearing of the people. And they said, "All that the Lord has spoken we will do, and we will be obedient." So Moses took the blood and sprinkled it on the people and said, "Behold the blood of the covenant which the Lord has made with you in accordance with all these words."

Symbolic of the redemption of God of His people, the blood of the Passover lamb would be shed at the Exodus, showing that the redemption had a spiritual side in terms of Israel's own need for forgiveness. And that is repeated here. The covenant requires the sprinkling of blood, because without the sprinkling of blood there is no remission of sin. So the blood of the covenant becomes a part of the ceremony by which God enters into this relationship with His people.

The thing I want you to notice about this passage in addition is the authority of the words of the Book of the Covenant. Moses first delivers orally to the people all that the Lord has taught him. The Lord Himself speaks the Ten Commandments from the mountain, in the hearing of all the people. They cannot bear the direct voice of God, and so God agrees with that and He uses Moses as an intermediary. And then He gives Moses an elaboration of the meaning of the Ten Commandments. He expands on those, Moses then delivers those orally to the people, and the people say, "All that the Lord has spoken we will do." Then Moses writes them in a book, the Book of the Covenant, and he reads the Book of the Covenant to the people. And you get the same response: "All that the Lord has spoken we will do." I am going to remark about the distinctiveness of the Ten Commandments as special revelation from God, but whether God speaks from heaven personally, to top of the mountain, whether he speaks through His attested spokesman Moses, or whether Moses reads from the book that he has written at God's command, the proper response is one in the same: "All that the Lord has spoken we will do." The inscripturation of the Book of the Covenant comes in this redemptive context, and it emphasized the authority of the written Word. So later on, as you know, when Joshua takes over the leadership position, his responsibility is to not depart from the Law of Moses, the Law of God that was given through Moses, to the right hand or to the left. It becomes the deposit of the will of God in His special revelation to His people. Now, that is the setting of the Ten Commandments in the history of redemption. They are in pursuit of the Abrahamic covenant. God delivers His people from Egypt, enters into a national covenant with them, and specifies their conduct as a nation that He has redeemed through Himself.

The second thing we want to notice about the Ten Commandments is their distinctiveness as special revelation. There are a couple of points to be recognized in terms of the Ten Commandments as they stand out in the Old Testament as far as special revelation is concerned. We mentioned the first: "And God spoke all these words, saying. . ." The voice of God Himself is the mode by which the Commandments are first given, and in the hearing of all the people. This is the first time on such a scale that the Lord has spoken His Word directly. God has spoken to individuals: Abraham, Isaac, Jacob and others. He has spoken through dreams. He has spoken face to face with Moses, but now with the expansion of God's people into a whole nation, this is the first time that God Himself speaks so they hear. That becomes a prominent theme, especially in the book of Deuteronomy. You did not see any form, you heard a voice. But God has spoken His words directly, and that is distinctive about the Ten Commandments. The other thing that is distinctive about them is that they are inscribed by God. The

Book of the Covenant is written by Moses, as we know, under inspiration of the Spirit, so its authority is not in question. But the Ten Commandments are unique in that they are inscribed by God Himself. Exodus 24:12 says, "Now the Lord said to Moses, 'Come up to me on the mountain and remain there, and I will give you the stone tablets, with the law and the commandment, which I have written for their instruction.'" Exodus 31:18 says, "And when God had finished speaking with Moses upon Mount Sinai, he gave him the two tablets of the testimony, tablets of stone, written by the finger of God." So you have both the voice of God in giving the Commandments from the top of Sinai, and in their permanent form, they are written by the finger of God; that is underscored again in Exodus 32:15-16. "Then Moses went down from the mountain with the two tablets of the testimony in his hand, tablets which were written on both sides; and they were written on one side and the other. And the tablets were God's work, and the writing was God's writing, engraved on the tablets." Well, this is astonishing in terms of the condescension of God to put His covenant in this form, first orally and then in writing.

We tend to see the two tablets as two tables, dividing the Commandments in terms of our responsibility toward God in the first table, and our responsibility toward our neighbor in the second table. Actually, the responsibility toward our neighbor we also owe to God, so it does not quite fit. But it is much more likely that the two tablets of the covenant or the two tablets of the Law are duplicate copies. According to the pattern of the suzerain treaty, both the vassal and the suzerain would retain a copy of the covenant. That fits with the pattern here. God condescends to have His copy as well as to give to Israel their copy. Both are deposited in the ark, because that is the place where God manifests His presence. But it follows the cultural form, and likely that explains the two tablets of the Law. In any case, the distinctiveness as special revelation which highlights their importance is that they were both spoken and written by God Himself. And when the first pair of tablets was broken in astonishment at the apostasy of Israel under Aaron and the golden calf, God graciously does it over again and inscribes the tablets over again. That sets them apart in terms of the mode of revelation by which they are given. There is something special about these Ten Commandments, and that uniqueness has to be appreciated.

A third element that we should note about the Ten Commandments is their comprehensiveness. As expression of the covenant way of life, notice the comprehensiveness of The Ten Commandments in Exodus 34:28, "So Moses was there with the Lord 40 days and 40 nights. He did not eat bread or drink water and God wrote the tablets of the word of the covenant, the ten commandments." I am using the New American Standard translation. Actually, the Hebrew says "the ten words." That is the way in which the Hebrew regularly refers to what we call the Ten Commandments, and they are the Ten Words. Now, that question arises as to the enumeration of these Words.

In recent debates in the U.S. House of Representatives concerning the debate on posting the Ten Commandments, the question was raised about whose enumeration we are going to use. After all, we do not agree on the enumeration of the Commandments. Well, that is a sub-point. You could list them without numbers as they were originally, but it is just provocative in terms of how these do differ. The Reformed, Anglican, and Orthodox Churches incorporate the prologue into their understanding of the document. "I am the Lord your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage." The Jews actually make that the first commandment. Sometimes in the Jewish enumeration you get all of that together with "You shall have no other gods before me," so it is the prologue and what we call the first commandment that is together. It is the first Word, "I am the Lord your God," and you can make a case for including that as the first commandment. As a matter of fact, Calvin in his catechism ran them together as the first commandment. In the Reformed, Anglican, and Orthodox Churches, we begin the enumeration with the injunctions, the stipulations: "You shall have no other gods before me. You shall not make any graven image and not worship them," and so forth. In the Roman Catholic and Lutheran tradition, which is a late development by the time of Augustine, you have

this, “You shall have no other gods and you shall make no graven images and bow down and worship them,” to be the first commandment together. So there is no distinct prohibition of images; it is just the prohibition of “no other gods.”

Now, when we get to the exposition of the commandments later on, I will make an internal case for the Reformed, Anglican, Orthodox enumeration. It is also the older Jewish enumeration to recognize that there is a difference there. In any case, the Roman Catholic and Lutheran differ in their enumeration of the commandments. So it is something to be aware of when we talk in pro-life movement about the sixth commandment, that Lutherans and Roman Catholics are going to talk about the fifth commandment, and that gives us some momentary confusion. The way they get ten beginning with eliding the first and the second together is to divide the command not to covet into a twofold commandment. But in any case, they are the Ten Words and the Jewish understanding, which incorporates what we call the prologue as part of the commandments, is significant. It ought to be a part of the Ten Commandments. That is, we ought to understand them as a unified document. They are the covenant, and the complete covenant that God spoke and inscribed includes the prologue. So it is a part of what He spoke from the mountain, and it is a part of what was inscribed on the tablets.

The other note on comprehensiveness is derived from Deuteronomy 5:22, and it is something that we should notice. The comprehensiveness is indicated by the fact that they are the covenant; they give both the principle of grace and redemption in the prologue, and they give the substance of the covenant way of life in the further specifications. Deuteronomy 5:22 is significant. In Deuteronomy 5:22 Moses says, “These words the Lord spoke to all your assembly at the mountain from the midst of the fire, and the cloud, and the gloom, and from the great voice.” This follows the Ten Commandments in Deuteronomy. And notice that next clause: “and he added no more. And he wrote them on two tablets of stone and gave them to me.” That little phrase “he added no more” points us to their comprehensiveness. Of course God added a lot more through Moses in the Book of the Covenant. And then in the second writing of the Law, the book of Deuteronomy, that is expanded even more so, as Israel is about to enter the land. But in terms of the principles that direct the covenant way of life, He added no more. There is a comprehensiveness to these ten. They are distinct in terms of the way in which they are given a special revelation, and they are comprehensive in that they are the complete will of God as expressed in His covenant with His people.

Now, a fourth thing that we should notice about the Ten Commandments is how they function within the canon of Scripture. And let me highlight a couple of things about the way the Ten Commandments are highlighted within Scripture. Leviticus 19 is the great holiness chapter in the Old Testament. “The Lord spoke to Moses saying, ‘Speak to all the congregation of the sons of Israel and say to them, You shall be holy, for I the Lord your God am holy.’” The verse is repeated in 1 Peter 1:13-16, showing that the basic principles that orient the life of God’s people are the same under both Testaments. There is one covenant people that is expressed under both Testaments. If we look at Leviticus 19 in detail, we will find that it is an expression of the covenant way of life. It has both a vertical dimension and the horizontal dimension. It deals both with ceremonial ethics and also interpersonal and social ethics. It is an expansion of the principles of the Ten Commandments in light of the concrete life of the people of God.

Here is the way they line up in Leviticus 19: other gods and images, commandments one and two, are in verse 4, God’s name is verse 12, the Sabbath is verse 3 and again in verse 30, parents is verse 3, murder in verse 16, adultery in verse 29, theft in verse 11 and again in verse 13, false witness in verse 11 and again in verse 16, and covetousness in verses 17-18. And even the prologue, which we note is integral to the Ten Commandments as a covenant document, appears. It appears as a postlogue, I guess you could say, but it is climactically put at the end. I think that what we should learn from this is how formative the

Decalogue is, including its prologue, to the exposition of the covenant way of life. Because of its comprehensiveness, you find it in all the expansions that you find in Scripture. Particularly, this section of Scripture defines more than any other the covenant way of life and traces the root of the fulfillment of the Commandments to love for neighbor as far as the obligations to our fellow human beings are concerned. I sometimes call it “the love chapter” because it shows that love is the fulfilling of the Law. Twice in this chapter you have the principal phrase to love your neighbor as yourself and to love the alien as yourself.

So Leviticus 19 is an exposition of the law of love; there is no incompatibility between love and Law. Love finds its expression in the practices of justice, mercy, and fidelity, and those are further specifiable in terms of this comprehensive summary of the will of God. Another passage where we see the Ten Commandments being used in this way is Hosea 4:1-2. “Listen to the word of the Lord, O sons of Israel, for the Lord has a case against the inhabitants of the land. There is no faithfulness [*emith*] or kindness [*hesed*] or knowledge of God in the land.” Two of these are the things we have seen that are characteristic of the primary forms of love: fidelity and kindness. Then how are these further specified? “There is swearing, deception, murder, stealing, and adultery. They employ violence so that bloodshed follows bloodshed.” Well, you will look at those and you will see that they are commandments that derive from what we call the second table of the Law.

Another example would be Jeremiah 7:1-11:

The word that came to Jeremiah from the Lord, saying, “Stand in the gate of the Lord’s house, and proclaim there this word, and say, ‘Hear the word of the Lord, all you of Judah who enter by these gates to worship the Lord. Thus says the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel: Amend your ways and your deeds, and I will let you dwell in this place. Do not trust in deceptive words saying “This is the temple of the Lord, the temple of the Lord, the temple of the Lord.” For if you truly amend your ways and your deeds, and if you truly practice justice between a man and his neighbor, if you do not oppress the alien, the orphan, the widow, and do not shed innocent blood in this place, nor walk after other gods in your own ruin, then I will let you dwell in this place, in the land that I gave to your fathers forever and ever. Behold, you are trusting in deceptive words to no avail.’”

Now, he has enumerated the practices that ought to characterize God’s people: justice, not oppression of the alien, the orphan, the widow, and no shedding of innocent blood. Then he comes to verse 9 to specify them. “Will you steal, murder, commit adultery, swear falsely, and offer sacrifices to Baal and walk after other gods that you have not known”—he is taking the Ten Commandments in reverse order—“and then come and stand before me in this house, which is called by my name, and say ‘We are delivered!’—that you may do all these abominations? Has this house, which is called by my name, become a den of robbers in your sight? Behold, I, even I have seen it, declares the Lord.” Well, now, in both these cases, both in Hosea and Jeremiah, the specification of the guilt of Israel is not only in terms of the lack of practice of justice, mercy, and fidelity, which we know embody love; but it is specifiable in terms of the stipulations of the Ten Commandments. Now, that continues in the New Testament.

The ten Commandments continue to function in that way in the New Testament. And that the Ten Words are still operative in this comprehensive way appears from Jesus’ exposition of the moral law in the Sermon on the Mount, especially Matthew 5:17-48. Now, I will urge you to include in your library John Stott’s writing on the message of the Sermon on the Mount, which is an exegetical treatment of Matthew 5-7. We need a good solid exposition of the Sermon on the Mount to form us in terms of our understanding of the will of God, and Stott does a masterful job in that respect. This section is called “Is

the Sermon Relevant” and he specifies the various ways in which the sermon is relevant. His outline of the sermon is very useful: Christians’ character, the beatitudes, the Christian’s influence, the metaphors of salt and light, a Christian’s righteousness (that is the section that we are concerned with, 5:17-48). And then he goes on with other aspects that are very well done: Christians’ piety, ambition, relationships, commitment. But under Christian’s righteousness he says, “What is to be a Christian’s attitude to the moral law of God? Is the very category of law abolished in the Christian life? As advocates of the new morality and of the nominative law school strangely assert, no, Jesus had not come to abolish the Law and the prophets but the fulfill them,” and he goes on in that vein. “Of this greater Christian righteousness, He then gave six illustrations relating to murder, adultery, divorce, swearing, revenge, and love. And each antithesis, ‘You have heard that it was said, but I say unto you,’ he rejected the easygoing tradition of the scribes, reaffirmed the authority of the Old Testament, and drew out the full and exacting implications of God’s moral law.” That is a very important principle to understand.

When Jesus says, “You have heard it said,” He is talking about the tradition of the elders. When He quotes the Old Testament, He says, “It is written.” This is quite different. “You have heard that it was said to them in old time.” He is talking about the tradition of the elder, an oral tradition which, it was claimed, went back to Moses. That was a claim without historical foundation, but that was and is the claim. But it is a way of subordinating the Word of God to the traditions of men. So Jesus is correcting a self-serving exposition of the Law in terms of bringing out its real meaning. The real meaning can be found in the Old Testament. We saw that in the exposition of Leviticus 19, “You shall not hate your brother in your heart, and you shall love the alien as the native born among you.” The Old Testament was a religion of the heart. The Old Testament ethic did search the heart. As a matter of fact, in Deuteronomy 5:29 there is a recognition for the need of heart obedience. In Deuteronomy 5:29, in the context of presenting the Law, there is this record of the Lord saying “O, that they had such a heart in them, that they would fear me and keep all my commandments always, that it may be well with them and with their sons forever!” There is a recognition, right in Deuteronomy, that just having the Law is not enough, that you need a heart to obey the Law. And already in this assertion in Deuteronomy you have the recognition of the need for a renewal apart. In the Old Testament language it is the circumcision of the heart, because not all Israel were “Israel.” Not all Israel were believers. Not all who had been redeemed from Egypt had participated in the blood of the sacrifice more than outwardly. They had been spared in terms of their lives, but their heart attitudes had not been changed. Already in Deuteronomy you have a recognition that righteousness has to come from within, and a change of heart is necessary in order for the Ten Commandments to have their place in the life of God’s people.

The key verse that Stott alludes to is Matthew 5:17: “Do not think that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets.” The Law or the Prophets is a twofold designation of the Old Testament canon. The threefold designation is the Law, the Prophets, and the Writings. Sometimes the Old Testament is referred to just as the Law, sometimes the Law and the Prophets, and occasionally as the Law, the Prophets, and the Writings. So Jesus is saying here, “Do not think that I came here to abolish the Old Testament.” He did not come to abolish the Old Testament. “I come not to abolish them but to fulfill them. And I tell you the truth, until heaven and earth disappear, not the smallest letter or the least stroke of the pen will by any means disappear from the Law until everything is accomplished.” So Christ did not come to abolish; He came to fulfill the Old Testament, which contained doctrinal teaching, predictive prophecy, and ethical precepts. And the ethical precepts Christ fulfilled in a twofold way. He declared their full import and He obeyed them to the full. Now, that is an important coordination, and it shows us the right way to use the Sermon on the Mount.

The Sermon on the Mount is very searching. When we come to the exposition of the Ten Commandments, we will incorporate what Jesus says about these things in that area. But Jesus is

showing that the Law of God properly understood searches the heart, and no one can fulfill it. You have to have righteousness beyond that of the Scribes and Pharisees. And He obeys it to the full. It is His obedience by which we are made righteous. You have the Law both in its convicting function—convicting of our sin, driving us to Christ our righteousness—and as the standard, the unchanging standard of God that shows how to live in union with Christ, to show our gratitude for what Christ has done. It is the dual aspect of God's Law that is brought out so clearly in the Sermon on the Mount. For our purposes here, we are under the function within Scripture. And once again, Christ Himself goes back to the Ten Commandments as expressing the summary of the will of God. There are a couple of other places where He does that—Matthew 19:16-22, the story of the rich young ruler, and Matthew 22:34-40, where Jesus' citing the Commandments gives as a summary love for God and love for our neighbor.

Let us look at one more text in Jesus' teaching, Matthew 15:19, to show how the Ten Commandments function. I will begin at verse 17. "Do you not see that whatever enters in the mouth goes into the stomach and then out of the body? But the things that come out of the mouth come from the heart, and these make a man unclean. For out of the heart comes evil thoughts, murder, adultery, sexual immorality, theft, false testimony, slander." Now, the important thing to notice about this text is that it does not stick with the strict terms of the Commandments as they appear. It shows that the Commandments focus on particular sin, but all the sins that are in that class the Scripture elsewhere elaborates are included as a matter of principle under that sin. With "evil thoughts, murder," there He is repeating what He has said in the Sermon on the Mount, that the source of murder is evil thoughts. That is also forbidden. It is not just the external deed; it is also bearing a grudge, to quote Leviticus 19. Then He names adultery, that is *morkea* in the Greek, with sexual immorality, *pornea* in the Greek. Well, there is an idea abroad that the Bible only condemns adultery in terms of sexual sin and that you cannot violate the second commandment unless you are a married person or having sexual intercourse with someone who is married who is not your spouse. I recently heard about an editor of a Christian magazine who had risen very rapidly to that position who was defending sexual intercourse outside of marriage, and her assertion was that when we look at what the Bible really says, we will see that that is not right. Well, I have heard that more than once, that it is only adultery. And you take the idea that the commandment as relates to adultery can only be committed in some way against marriage, but Jesus includes all sins that are illicit in terms of sexual conduct in the phrase *pornea*. There are ways of sinning against the seventh commandment other than, strictly speaking, adultery. People are always wanting to get technical, saying that if it is not technically adultery, then the conduct is justifiable.

Then there are "theft, false testimony, and slander." False testimony is in a court of law. "You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor" is what the commandment says. But does that mean that we can slander him outside of court? Well, of course not. It is dealing with truthfulness in human relations and protection of reputation. This provides a hermeneutical clue to how we should understand the Ten Commandments. They are comprehensive, and in terms of the way in which they function in Scripture, you can see that they are what are technically called synecdoches, that is, a part for the whole. They focus typically on the most aggregated form of a sin, and then all things leading up to that would also be forbidden.

There is another example in 1 Timothy 1:8-11. "We know that the law is good, if one uses it lawfully, realizing the law is not made for righteous men but for those who are lawless and rebellious, for the ungodly and sinners, for the unholy and profane, for those who kill their fathers or mothers, for murderers, and immoral men, and homosexuals, and kidnappers, and liars, and perjurers, and whatever else is contrary to sound teaching." When you go through this list, you see that it is going down the list of the Ten Commandments. The Ten Commandments in their function to expose sin is what is being presented here. Those first three are the first three commandments. "For those who kill their fathers or

mothers” could be the sixth commandment; but actually in the order which Paul is expressing this, that is the fifth commandment. The worst sin against your father and your mother is to kill them, and it happens.

That phrase in the New American Standard is translated “kidnappers,” and is actually dealing with slavery. The Greek word that is used there is “treating human beings as animals.” In the economic lists of the time, slaves were *andrapodistes*. You had four-footed creatures and human-footed creatures, and they were all property as a consequence of being enslaved. In the list of Commandments, this comes at number eight, which is you should not steal. The worst form of dishonor to your father and mother would be to murder them. The worst form of stealing is to steal a human being and treat him as your property. That is what this passage is talking about. So you see how the Commandments’ function is not literally within the term that is there. They cover all sins of that class, and there are even more heinous forms than the words themselves indicate in terms of murdering of your parents or stealing a human being and treating him as your property.

Those last two, Matthew 15:19 and 1 Timothy 1, are largely negative in their thrust. They disclose sins. The use of the Ten Commandments in Ephesians 6:1-4 is a more positive example. For people who are wondering about whether the Ten Commandments are for us today, I found this text useful, and usually illuminating. Ephesians 6:1-4 says, “Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right.” We are talking about a Christian responsibility, something that is in the Lord to be fulfilled: “Children, obey your parents.” Verse 2 says, “Honor your father and mother, which is the first commandment with a promise.” Now, notice that Paul not only quotes the fifth commandment, “Honor your father and mother,” as relevant to Christian obedience and Christian conduct, but he mentions that it is the first commandment with a promise. He is thinking, in terms of the list of ten, that the fifth commandment is the first one that has a promise attached to it, “that it may go well with you and that your days may be long in the land that the Lord your God has given you.” Here it says that you may enjoy long life on the earth following God’s commands. And the principle of parental filial piety, obedience to parents, to honor father and mother, has a significant promise attached. And it is not like all the wisdom proverbs that have to do with these types of things; there is not an absoluteness there that you can make a case for. But in terms of the general outworking of God’s providence, following His commands leads not only to His approval and fellowship with Him, but it also has social consequences that are positive.

Notice finally that verse 4 understands the reciprocal responsibility of parents: “Fathers, do not exasperate your children, instead bring them up in the training and instruction of the Lord.” In “Honor your father and your mother,” the principle is on the part of children to recognize the rightful authority that God has given to parents. On the side of parents, it is the rightful exercise of that authority, and particularly fathers who tend to be impatient, I speak from experience, and have destructive attitudes toward their children so that they never feel that they can do anything right. You know, I have been there. This verse stands out. You need to be a certain kind of parent, too. Yes, children are required to obey, but you are required to bring them up in the Lord’s nurture and admonition, and that is quite different from the kinds of ways we go about raising our children oftentimes.

Then the other passage that we have seen that affirms the Ten Commandments is Romans 13:8-10, where Paul relates it to the law of love, so that there is one summary commandment. But the summary commandment fulfills the Law, and it is specified once again in terms of the Commandments as appear in the Decalogue with respect to neighbor love.