



THE ROLE OF THE LAW

Disciples & Early Church • U3#2 1st-3rd Gr. • Aug.25, 2024

Concept

Because God's Law is perfection, it teaches us our need for His forgiveness through faith in Jesus.

Goal

Students will learn that God gave us the Law to show us our sin and our need for His forgiveness. They will learn that He gave it to us to lead us to dependence on Christ.

Passage

Galatians 2: 21-26

Key Verse: "So the law was our personal teacher to lead us to Christ that we might be made right with God by faith." Galatians 3:24

Planning Ahead

Lesson Supplies	Craft Supplies
<p>Introduction:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>The Topsy-Turvy Kingdom, Dottie & Josh McDowell</i> <p>Learning Activity #1:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Velcro or Gaffer's Tape <p>Lesson:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Dry erase marker 	<p>Activity Stations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>The Awesome Book of Bible Facts, Sandy Silverthorne</i> <i>An x-ray of a broken bone</i> "The Ten Commandments" page 1/student Paper lunch bag, 1/student Paper cross, 1/student Glue sticks Scissors Markers

*TEACHERS PLEASE NOTE

For clarity, the italicized areas in the Planning Ahead section indicate supplies that are in—and should be returned to—your classroom SHARED SUPPLY bag.

Background Information (for the teacher)

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After leading His people out of Egypt God gave them the Law (Exodus 20). The commandments, i.e., the Law, set the standard for relating to God and others. The first 4 commandments address our relationship with God, to love Him with all our heart, soul, mind, and strength. The remaining 6 address our relationship with people, don't lie, steal, covet, murder; or, as Jesus summed up in John 13:34, "love one another, even as I have loved you." How ironic that even as these laws were being written in stone by the finger of God, the Israelites were in the process of breaking them as they fashioned the golden calf.

As much as we would like to think we are able to keep the law, we fall short of God's standard of perfection (Rom. 3:23; James 2:10). And yet we are called to be perfect as our heavenly Father is perfect (Mt. 5:48). How can we be perfect? This can happen only through Christ, who fulfills the law on our behalf (Mt. 5:17). Through one man's disobedience many were made sinners, even so through the obedience of the One many will be made righteous (Rom. 5:19). Our righteousness is not based on works or obedience to the law, but on the finished work of Christ, His grace (Eph. 2:8,9).

So what is the purpose of the law? Its purpose is to show us the character of God and our sinfulness. The law is not bad, but is a diagnostic device to show us that we have a problem, we are sinful. Just as an x-ray shows broken bones, the law reveals our broken relationship with God. By revealing the problem of sin, the law leads us to Christ. Once we accept the reality of our need for forgiveness, it is faith that justifies us or makes us right with God. Once in Christ we are no longer subject to the law.

"There is only one way for any of us to resolve the tension between the high ideals of the gospel and the grim reality of ourselves: to accept that we will never measure up, but that we do not have to. We are judged by the righteousness of the Christ who lives within, not our own. ...anything that makes me feel comfort with God's moral standard, anything that makes me feel, 'At last I have arrived,' is a cruel deception. But...anything that makes me feel discomfort with God's forgiving love is also a cruel deception. 'There is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus'..."

Additional Reading: Romans 5, 6; Galatians 3, 4; I Timothy 1:8, 9.

[1] Philip Yancey, *The Jesus I Never Knew*, © 1995, Zondervan Publishing House, pp. 142-144.

Activity Stations

- **Craft – Ten Commandments**

- **Instructions:** Read through "God's Good Rules," pp. 20, 21 of The Awesome Book of Bible Facts. Give each student a copy of "THE TEN COMMANDMENTS," a paper lunch bag and a page with the cross. Have them cut tablets out of the lunch bag, then write short versions of the commandments on the tablets. Briefly discuss the commandments, how they show us what God is like and how far short we fall at loving like God (refer to the key verse at the bottom of the cross). Use examples, such as times that they don't respect their parents or when they covet the toys of their friends, etc., to illustrate that they don't keep the law. Have them color the letters of the word FAITH on the cross, then cut out the cross and verse and glue on top of the tablets. Paul said that the entire law is summed up in a single command: Love your neighbor as yourself (Galatians 5:14). The Christian life is not about keeping the law but it is about love. The only way we can love is by faith in Christ and His grace.

- **X-ray**

- **Instructions:** Look at the broken bone on the x-ray with the students. Discuss the purpose of an x-ray. X-rays show problems that we can't see with the eye. People have x-rays because they have symptoms that are causing them problems, such as the pain of a broken bone. In the same way, God's law works as an x-ray of our hearts to show us our problem with God.

Story – The Topsy-Turvy Kingdom

Instructions: Begin the story on the sixth page, which begins, "This is the tale of Herbie, the prince..."

Debrief: In the story we saw what happened when the people in the kingdom decided they didn't like the king's laws. The king had made these laws for the good of everyone. God gave His people, the Israelites, laws that showed them what He is like and how He wanted them to live. Those laws are called the Ten Commandments. If the Israelites had followed those laws perfectly life would have been wonderful for everyone. And can you imagine how wonderful life would be today if everyone followed those laws perfectly? But God knew that no one other than Jesus would ever be able to follow His commandments perfectly. This week we will learn why God gave us those Ten Commandments when He knew we could never keep them perfectly.

Let's play a game. We are going to count off by three to divide into teams.

Learning Activity #1

Lg. Group

Game—Standing Broad Jump

Instructions: Put a strip of Velcro or gaffer's tap on the floor as a starting point, leaving enough space for the students to stand behind the line. Put another strip on the floor parallel to and at least eight feet from the first strip (the distance should be the width of the fabric cross you will lay down after the lesson). Tell them to get their legs and arms warmed up and stretched out because they are going to try to jump the farthest of anyone. Have them do knee-bends, touch their toes, etc., to get ready. Have the first team of children line up on the starting line. Tell them that the winning jumper will get a hot fudge sundae. At the signal they will all jump. Put a piece of tape on the spot of the farthest jump. Then follow in the same way with the next two teams. Then have a "jump off" with the winner from each team. Ham it up by cheering them on and yelling encouragement. When you have the "winner," give him/her the bad news that even though he/she jumped the farthest of all the students in the class, it wasn't good enough. The rule you forgot to tell them was that they had to make it to the other line in order to win. No ice cream sundae.

Debrief: Did the three of you who jumped the farthest think that you deserved the prize? Did you maybe think you were better than the rest of the students in this class because you could jump farther than the others? What did you think when you found out that to get the prize you had to jump all the way to the other side of the room? Why would anyone make a rule like that?

Transition

Everyone sit in a big circle. Let's talk some more about rules and laws.

Lesson

Lg. Group

Instructions: Draw the two illustrations shown to the left on the white board at the appropriate times in the lesson.



Rules or laws give us instruction, define what is right and wrong and help to keep order. What are some of our class rules? (Some rules are listen when others speak, walk in room, respect each other, etc.) If we didn't have class rules there would be chaos. When we choose to disobey the rules at home, in school or in class there are consequences for others as well as for us. Think about what it would be like if we didn't have any traffic laws. It would be extremely dangerous to drive. There'd be many accidents and people on the road would be even more frustrated than they are now. It would be a lot like the kingdom in "Topsy Turvy."

So laws are good. They help us know what is right and wrong and they keep order in our world.

Lesson Continued

But God gave us the Ten Commandments, laws that He knew we would be unable to keep perfectly. Who knows where they are in the Bible (Exodus 20:1-21)? Who knows why God gave us the Ten Commandments? (Allow some time for response.) The law describes God's character, His standard for how we are to love Him and how we love others. Turn to Matthew 22 and follow along as I read verses 36-39. So here Jesus told the Pharisees that God's law is summed up in the two great commandments: 1) to love God with all your heart, soul, mind and strength and 2) to love your neighbor as yourself. Can we obey this law? Can we really love God with all our heart, soul and mind, all the time? (No.) And even if we could love God perfectly all the time, can anyone love other people perfectly all the time? (No.) Listen while I read James 2:10. So, what happens when we break even just one law? We are guilty of breaking the whole law and therefore separated from God. (Draw first image)

Jesus said that if we want to have a relationship with God that we must love God and people perfectly all the time. But the problem is that we can't do that. If He knew we couldn't do that do you think it was mean of God to make that law? (Allow students to respond briefly as it is important for them to consider this question.) God gave us the law to show us that He is perfect and we are not. "So the law was our personal teacher to lead us to Christ that we might be made right with God by faith." That is our key verse from Galatians 3:24. The law shows us that we can't be perfect and get to God on our own. Just like this picture shows, our problem is that our sin separates us from God. No matter how hard we try, we can't ever be good enough to get to God on our own. Jesus was the only person who ever kept the law perfectly. He never sinned. And because He never sinned He could pay for our sins by taking the punishment we deserve. He did that by dying on the cross. If you want to have a relationship with God tell God you believe that Jesus paid for your sins. By your faith you will begin a relationship with God. Your sin is covered by Jesus' blood that was shed on the cross. And you can get to God, just as this picture shows (Draw second image).

Remember our key verse, "So the law was our personal teacher to lead us to Christ that we might be made right with God by faith" (Galatians 3:24). The law shows us how perfect God is and how much we sin. We can't obey the law perfectly. Even if we only make one wrong choice our whole life, we're guilty and separated from God. Jesus took the punishment we deserve so we can be forgiven. When we accept Jesus' death for us, we become a child of God. We can be grateful for the law because it shows us our problem and guides us to Jesus.

Let's get back in the same groups you were in for our broad jump so we can talk about what difference this makes in our lives.

Transition

Learning Activity# 2 Sm. Groups

- The first thing we need to do is to tell Jesus we want His gift of forgiveness. What's next? Once we have received Jesus' gift of forgiveness are there certain things we have to do to make sure that we will always be His friend? Are there certain things we have to do so that He will love us more? Look up at the picture on the white board. Once you become God's friend, you will always be His friend and will be in heaven after you die. Just as you can never be good enough to become His friend, so you can do nothing to lose His friendship once you have received it.
- Does that mean we can forget about the law and choose to live any way we want? Remember our key verse, "So the law was our personal teacher to lead us to Christ that we might be made right with God by faith" (Galatians 3:24). We have been made right with God! We are God's friends and will be His friends forever. The more we think about the sacrifice Jesus made to come to earth so He could die for us, the more we love Him and want to love others. We can't love the way we should, but now we have the help of the Holy Spirit to teach us and give us the ability to love like Jesus. He gives us the desire to live so others can also know Him.
- Do you have a bad attitude that needs to be changed? Is there someone you can't or don't want to love? Do you have a hard time obeying your parents? Do you know that the Holy Spirit wants to help you change those things? All you have to do is ask Him.

Missions Prayer: Talk about and pray for the Oasis Giving Campaign.

Let's pray and thank God that He gave us the law to show us that we need Him.

Optional Activities

Game – "Bet You Can't... Do It Perfectly!"

Instructions: Tell the students you will instruct them on a task that they are to repeat and do perfectly each time. **Note:** These tasks all seem easy at first and can be done to varying degrees but are impossible to do perfectly every time. Have the students come up with their own tasks for each other to do.

- **Task 1:** Say "Rubber baby buggy bumpers" five times very fast without making a mistake.
- **Task 2:** Stretch arms out straight to the side and point index fingers. Close your eyes, bring your arms to the front and touch your fingers together in front of you. Do this five times touching the tips of your fingers perfectly each time.