

3.

Romans 13:9-10

Be Pure

There seems to be a great amount of confusion among Christians about the place of the Ten Commandments within the New Covenant. On the one hand, the New Testament is clear that the New Covenant is about *grace* not *law* (Rom. 3:28; 4:16). Yet in the Old Testament we read that the law given through Moses was to be *everlasting* and *forever* (for example, Exodus 31:16). But Hebrews 8:13 states that the Old Covenant was made obsolete when Christ established the New Covenant. Yet, there are entire denominations within Christianity based upon the central place of the Ten Commandments, particularly, keeping the sabbath. It is worth understanding that there were different categories of law under the Old Covenant. These include - *moral* laws, *civil* laws, *ceremonial* laws, and *food* laws.

1. What place do the *food laws* have in the New Covenant based on Mark 7:18-19?
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2. What place do the ceremonial laws (the instructions to the Old Covenant priests) have in the New Covenant according to Hebrews 8:6-7?
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Deuteronomy 23:13 is an example of one of Israel's *civil* laws. Civil laws are those laws which give rules for a *civilised* society. They are usually designed for a people's welfare. Civil laws often vary from country to country and sometimes from state to state. Over time, some cultures even develop unwritten rules which everyone is expected to keep and these known as *conventions*.

3. In Matthew 15:1-2 we see such an example where the Pharisees asked Jesus why His disciples broke one of these traditions/conventions. How did Christ feel about being challenged like this judging on His response in Matthew 15:3-20?
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Christ's response to the Pharisees makes an important point about the moral laws of the Old Covenant. Morality is the measure of right and wrong conduct compared to the Natural Law which God has written on every human heart (Rom 2:14-15). The point we draw from Christ's response to the Pharisees is this: *When an Old Covenant moral law is reiterated in the New Testament, it is binding on the follower of Christ.* All but one of the Ten Commandments are reiterated in the New Testament.

4. Read Matthew 12:1-8 and note which of the Ten Commandments is not only *not* reiterated in the New Testament, but also note how Christ claimed it was no longer applicable to His followers.
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It has been noted that six of the Ten Commandments pertain to our relationship with God, and four pertain to our relationship with others.

5. Note the four commandments which Paul selected in Romans 13:9 and how he summed these particular four of the Ten up with just one command.
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Each of the four commands which Paul refers to effects how we treat others. We live in a world where the vulnerable are exploited and are *harmed* as a result.

6. How would our society look if just these four commands were commonly obeyed? (Never underestimate the power of gospel to transform a life!)
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Amen.