

## ***What About the Two Greatest Commands?***

Recently I was walking across a parking lot in another state and noticed a sticker on the back window of a pickup truck. It said: “*Obey the Ten Commandments!*” I realize that our current culture is in dire need of moral direction and I know that the Ten Commandments could provide some of that moral direction. However, I believe that such advice, if heeded, would not produce what the owner of the sticker really wants. While the rules would be guides for moral direction, they could not force change upon us. In addition, many would rebel simply because of the almost programmed response to anything that smacks of religion.

We must understand that the moral direction of a person, and ultimately of a nation can only be changed one heart at a time. While the principles set for in the Ten Commandments are good, one must also realize that they were for the nation of Israel and were not meant to save those people, but to guide them in godly living, and to ultimately guide them to Christ (Galatians 3:25). Besides, many of our current laws are based on the same principles as the Ten Commandments—Murder, theft, perjury still stand condemned, even in secular law. Adultery was once illegal as well.

One must understand that if we obey the Ten Commandments as secular law, we would have to observe Saturday as the day of worship and rest. Since the old covenant has passed away, those commandments are not binding upon us (Ephesians 2:14-16). The principles underlying the Ten Commandments, however, are brought forth in the new covenant and are written on the hearts of Christians (Hebrews 8:8-13). The Sabbath, for example, as such is not binding upon Christians, but the principle of worship is.

Rather than “obey the Ten Commandments,” it would be far better for all to remember the two *greatest* commands. You see, Jesus “cut to the chase” and provided the foundation for righteous living when he said, “***You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul, and with all your mind. This is the great and first commandment. And a second is like it: You shall love your neighbor as you love your self***” (Matthew 22:37-39, ESV).

We cannot make all religious law secular law, but if these goals are in a person’s mind, love will be in the heart and can direct one’s life. Ideally, all would give their hearts and lives to Jesus and thus be saved (John 15:14, 1 Timothy 2:4), but to the extent that people would think first of God and others, everyone be better off.

—Lance Cordle