

IS THE LAW USEFUL FOR SANCTIFICATION?

- We now turn our attention to the Law or laws of God and how they are to be viewed by the church.
- This is no small question and should be taken seriously by every believer of every age. For if the laws of God are still binding on the Christian today, he is under obligation to know and follow them. But, if the law of God has no bearing on the believer, he would do well to stop trying to use it for his own good works.
- Most Christians don't know what to do with or think about the law of God. Many believe that the Old Testament was all about law and the New Testament was all about grace.
 - Some go to such an extreme view as to believe that there are two gods or that the god of the Old Testament was taken over by the god of the New Testament¹.
- "It is a basic theological question that many Christians have asked throughout the history of the church and it is an important query. Many answers have been given to that, not all of them good. Obviously, there are two answers that are dead wrong and lead to two opposite ditches that the follower of Christ must avoid: Antinomianism (the law of God has no place in the life of the believer and he/she is free to live however they please) and legalism (I am saved by how closely I adhere to God's commands—works righteousness)."²

How has the law been viewed in relation to the Christian?

- "The Scripture advocates that we must convince men and women, in every culture, in every society, that there is truth, there is authority, there are rules and there is a judge. And they must understand, to put it this way simply, law before they'll ever understand what? Grace. If ever there was a time for the proclamation of law and sin and the need for repentance and forgiveness, it is in this society. Sadly, it is at this very juncture in society when the church is largely abandoning that emphasis."³
- "The law shows us the character of God, and the law also shows us what pleases God. That is not going to save us, and it's not going to give us any additional credit, but it does play a role in our lives because it's going to show us better the pure character of the God who gave us the law and what pleases Him. If I transgress the law, I'm getting a signal that I'm not pleasing Him."⁴

¹ While this certainly was popular in the 3rd-4th centuries Gnostic teachings, today more churches act as if this is true by leaving the teachings of the OT in favor of those from the NT. Those who hold to the "Red-Letter" trend; only Jesus' words matter. Others have taught to "unhitch ourselves from the OT" to focus better on faith. Out of ignorance, some will say things like "Jesus is love but the OT is all about wrath."

² <https://founders.org/articles/of-what-use-is-the-law-three-purposes/>

³ <https://www.gty.org/sermons/80-178/the-purpose-of-the-law>

⁴ <https://learn.ligonier.org/qas/what-place-does-the-law-of-god-have-in-the-christian-life>

- There have been two very distinct and accepted ways that the Old Testament Law has been viewed throughout church history.⁵
- There are those who hold to the three uses of the law: the moral, ceremonial, and civil.⁶ This is often times referred to as the *Covenantal View* of the law.
 - The *moral law* is so named because it reflects the very character of God and the way God has designed creation; it is thereby unchanging in its essence. Thus, the moral laws in the Old Testament continue to be binding upon the New Testament believer. The moral imperatives, “You shall not murder” (Exod 20:13; Deut 5:17) and “You shall not steal” (Exod 20:15; Deut 5:19) are examples of imperatives that are still binding since they are moral absolutes that reflect God’s character.
 - The *ceremonial law* is named after the religious ceremonial prescriptions that are given to Israel to dictate their worship of God. These laws include sacrifices and offerings (e.g., Lev 1–7), as well as priestly conduct during religious ceremony (e.g., Lev 8–10).
 - The *civil law* classifies any law which specifically deals with a cultural or geographically specific stipulation for Israel. For example, Israelites who stole an ox were to pay back five of their own oxen, or if they stole a sheep, they were to pay back four of their own (Exod 22:1). This law specifically targets the common livestock owner in Israel, whereas many readers of the Old Testament Law today do not own livestock. These kinds of laws are depicted as civil since they govern the judicial and everyday life aspects of Israel’s cultural, national existence.
- Even though this separation has been around for over 1000 years, it is not found in the pages of Scripture.
- Both the Old and New Testament seem to speak of the law in full unity, not in three parts.
- “There is also a practical problem with trying to differentiate the laws into a three-fold division of categories. There is no easy distinction between moral and ceremonial/civil laws. For example, although the Ten Commandments are often viewed as belonging to the moral law category, the fourth commandment (observing the Sabbath) clearly has ceremonial aspects as well as moral.”⁷
- There is also what is viewed as the *Dispensational View* of the Law.
- “The key to understanding the relationship between the Christian and the law is knowing that the Old Testament law was given to the ancient nation of Israel, not to Christians. The law was meant to govern God’s covenant people living in the Promised Land. Some of the laws were to teach the Israelites how to obey and please God (the Ten Commandments, for example). Some of the laws were to show the Israelites how to worship God and atone for sin (through the sacrificial system). Some of the laws were intended to

⁵ We will not discuss those who hold to the Law as a means for salvation; that is heresy. For our purpose we are going to discuss the two main views in evangelical / protestant theology.

⁶ All 3 definitions taken from <https://petergoeman.com/does-the-old-testament-law-apply-today/>

⁷ <https://petergoeman.com/does-the-old-testament-law-apply-today/>

make the Israelites distinct from other nations (e.g., the food and clothing rules). Some were civil laws that helped them organize their community and give right judgment in judicial matters. None of the Old Testament law is binding on Christians today.”⁸

- For a Dispensational View, the law had a time, purpose, and people.
- To be clear, this does not mean that the Old Testament law is irrelevant or useless.
- “While we can learn from the Old Testament law, to say that it applies to Christians today is incorrect. The Old Testament law is a unit. Either *all* of it applies, or *none* of it applies. If a person is obligated to keep the Sabbath as specified in the law, then he or she is also forbidden from eating catfish and wearing cotton-wool blends.”⁹
- **Why is there such a sharp contrast between Covenantal and Dispensational views?**
- **Covenantal View (One People of God):** This view emphasizes one continuous "Covenant of Grace" running through history. The Church is seen as the organic continuation (or fulfillment) of Israel. Therefore, the laws given to Israel naturally apply to the Church, spiritually and morally.
- **Dispensational View (Two Distinct Entities):** This view maintains a sharp distinction between Israel (an earthly, ethnic nation) and the Church (a heavenly, spiritual body unique to the present era). Because God deals with them under different "dispensations" (stewardships), the specific law code given to govern the nation of Israel does not govern the international Church.
- **Is the Christian under the Law?**
- **Covenantal View (Yes, as a Rule of Life):** Covenant theologians use the historical "threefold use of the law." They believe that for a justified Christian, the law no longer condemns (the first use), but it still acts as the **necessary rule of life and guide for sanctification** (the third use). The Christian obeys the law out of gratitude.
- **Dispensational View (No, the Law is Replaced):** Dispensationalists take New Testament phrases like "*not under law but under grace*" literally. They argue that the Mosaic Law has zero jurisdiction over the New Testament believer. Instead, the Christian is under a completely new economy called **the Law of Christ**, which consists of the commands given by Jesus and the Apostles in the New Testament.

Where is there agreement between the two views?

- **Salvation is by grace alone through faith alone.**
 - The law cannot save anyone; it is only through faith in Christ's once and for all sacrifice.
- **The law exposes and condemns sin in everyone's life.**

⁸ <https://www.gotquestions.org/Christian-law.html>

⁹ Ibid.

- The law is a mirror; it is a diagnostic tool to expose human wickedness and to convict the conscience. The law silences every mouth before God.
- **Christian freedom in Christ is never a license to sin at will.**
 - While there is certainly debate about how the Christian life is governed (law or grace), both views advocate holiness, a life of purity, and a deep love for God and others.
 - One cannot be saved and disregard God's moral expectations / commands.
- **The law found in the Old Testament are unchanging because God is unchanging.**
 - These are not arbitrary rules that God gave to stifle mankind's creativity or to make life not worth living.
 - They tell us about who God is and how to be perfect before Him.
- **Both systems see the Old Testament sacrificial system as ending in the final sacrifice of Christ.**
 - These sacrifices were temporary and mere shadows that pointed to Christ's final and permanent sacrifice.

WHAT DOES THE BIBLE TELL US ABOUT THE LAW?

- "Christians often view biblical law negatively. It is often viewed as diametrically opposed to the freedom we have through grace. Many Christians think that the Old Testament was primarily concerned with external obedience, whereas the New Testament is concerned with matters of the heart. However, a careful examination of the tone of the Law indicates that it is not to be viewed as something incongruent with the character of the New Testament Christian."¹⁰
- In other words, both the Old and New Testaments have a focus on the heart of the person who is following after God.
- Neither Testament is solely focused on the work of the person; but on the heart. Not only do both focus on the heart, but they also both focus on the works of the person to reveal their true heart towards God.
- God is clear in both the Old and New Testament, only those who are *perfect* can enter heaven.
- Jesus said in **Matthew 5:48** "Therefore you are to be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect."
- The law was given to show us what perfection looks like...what God looks like.
 - Though the law, we know of God's holy and righteous perfection. God's moral standards cannot change because God cannot change.
 - Though the law, we now know that God not only demands perfection, but also what perfection looks like in real life.

¹⁰ <https://petergoeman.com/the-heart-of-the-law-is-the-heart/>

Old Testament Passages

- **Deuteronomy 10:12-13** “Now, Israel, what does the LORD your God require from you, but to fear the LORD your God, to walk in all His ways and love Him, and to serve the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul, {13} and to keep the LORD'S commandments and His statutes which I am commanding you today for your good?”
- Israel’s commitment and relationship to God was not just about the external works but also about where their hearts were before Him.
- **1 Samuel 15:22** “Samuel said, ‘Has the LORD as much delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices as in obeying the voice of the LORD? Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to heed than the fat of rams.’”
- Again, it is about the heart, not only about the sacrifice. Make no mistake, the sacrifice is important as it reveals what is truly in the heart of the person.
- **Amos 5:21-24** “I hate, I reject your festivals, nor do I delight in your solemn assemblies. {22} Even though you offer up to Me burnt offerings and your grain offerings, I will not accept them; and I will not even look at the peace offerings of your fatlings. {23} Take away from Me the noise of your songs; I will not even listen to the sound of your harps. {24} But let justice roll down like waters and righteousness like an ever-flowing stream.”
- See what God says about their observance to rituals and obedience to His commands. God was not satisfied just because they gathered together or had the right festivals or even because they sang the right songs.
- He has always been chiefly concerned with full obedience that was motivated by a heart and mind that was fully committed to Him.
- **Ezekiel 14:1-6** “Then some elders of Israel came to me and sat down before me. {2} And the word of the LORD came to me, saying, {3} ‘Son of man, these men have set up their idols in their hearts and have put right before their faces the stumbling block of their iniquity. Should I be consulted by them at all? {4} Therefore speak to them and tell them, ‘Thus says the Lord GOD’, ‘Any man of the house of Israel who sets up his idols in his heart, puts right before his face the stumbling block of his iniquity, and then comes to the prophet, I the LORD will be brought to give him an answer in the matter in view of the multitude of his idols, {5} in order to lay hold of the hearts of the house of Israel who are estranged from Me through all their idols.’ {6} ‘Therefore say to the house of Israel, ‘Thus says the Lord GOD, ‘Repent and turn away from your idols and turn your faces away from all your abominations.’”
- Idols in the hearts of men has been since the beginning of time. God knows what is in our hearts and what we must do to rid ourselves of them.
- He does not want people to come to Him as they are actively worshipping idols in their own hearts.

- “For God has erected the seat of his empire in our hearts: but when we set up idols, we necessarily endeavour [sic] to overthrow God’s throne, and to reduce his power to nothing. Hence the most heinous crime of sacrilege is here shown in those old men *who caused idols to rise above their hearts*. For hence it follows that all their senses were drowned in their superstitions.”¹¹
- There are many other OT passages in which God makes abundantly clear that it was worship from the heart that He desired, not just conformity to the law through man’s works.

New Testament Passages

- God’s standard for you and me (and all the OT people) to get into heaven is perfection.
 - The Old Testament demanded holiness and perfection in order to get into heaven. While not giving the cure, the OT constantly pointed towards the coming One who would perfectly fulfill the law.
 - **Habakkuk 2:4** “Behold, as for the proud one, His soul is not right within him; But the righteous will live by his faith.”
 - **Isaiah 1:18** “‘Come now, and let us reason together,’ Says the LORD, ‘Though your sins are as scarlet, They will be as white as snow; though they are red like crimson, they will be like wool.’”
- While the message of perfection and holiness does not change in the New Testament, the One who is able to keep this standard is now revealed to be Jesus Christ, the Son of God.
- “While it’s true that the New Testament doesn’t teach that Christians will achieve sinless perfection in this age, it does teach that God requires perfection of us.”¹²
- People have a problem; we have a law that we can’t keep for perfection and God who says that we must be perfect to get into heaven.
- **Matthew 5:17-18** “Do not think that I came to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I did not come to abolish but to fulfill. {18} For truly I say to you, until heaven and earth pass away, not the smallest letter or stroke shall pass from the Law until all is accomplished.”
- Did Jesus mean that since He did not abolish the law, that it was still binding upon people?
- “...Matthew 5:17 appears to be saying that Jesus is not bringing about a forced abandonment of the Law, but rather He is bringing about the true manifestation of what the Law was always anticipating. In this understanding Jesus is not abolishing the law, but neither is He saying that it remains binding in all of its authority.”¹³

¹¹ John Calvin and Thomas Myers, *Commentary on the First Twenty Chapters of the Book of the Prophet Ezekiel*, vol. 2 (Bellingham, WA: Logos Bible Software, 2010), 45–46.

¹² <https://www.desiringgod.org/articles/be-perfect>

¹³ <https://petergoeman.com/how-did-jesus-fulfill-the-law-matt-517-18/>

- “Jesus did not save us by abolishing the law. He saved us by fulfilling it. the term that describes the work of fulfillment is Christ’s active obedience.”¹⁴
- **Romans 10:4** “For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to everyone who believes.”
- “...as indicated at the end of **verse 4**, Paul is saying that belief in Christ as Savior and Lord brings to an end the sinner’s futile quest for righteousness through his own imperfect attempts to fulfill the law. When a sinner receives Christ, he also receives the gift of Christ’s own righteousness.”¹⁵
- **Romans 3:20** “...because by the works of the Law no flesh will be justified in His sight; for through the Law comes the knowledge of sin.”
 - The law came so that people would know of their sin; not to justify people.
- **Galatians 3:24** “Therefore the Law has become our tutor to lead us to Christ, so that we may be justified by faith.”
 - Not only was the law given to show us our sin but also to lead us to Christ so that we could be justified...not by the works of the law but by faith in Christ.

WHAT NEEDS TO BE AVOIDED?

- There are essentially two traps that people can fall into when dealing with the Law of God.
- One is what is often called *legalism*...the other is *antinomianism*.
- Both are equally dangerous as they deny aspects or parts of the gospel message.

Legalism

- “...everyone is in trouble, especially those who are most religious, for they are most apt to rely upon their own virtues in order to gain God’s acceptance.”¹⁶
- The term *legalist* or *legalism* has become a catchphrase for anyone who desires to live a holy and godly life.
- Legalism is the practice of obedience to the laws of God or any manmade rule so that one can merit forgiveness or right standing with God.
- Legalism is not trying to be holy because God is holy. Legalism is not when one gives up sinful practices so that they can please God with their life.
- Legalism is not when a believer abstains from a “questionable” practice because they would rather not sear their conscience with something that is questionable.

¹⁴ William P. Farley, *Hidden in the Gospel: Truths You Forget to Tell Yourself Every Day*, 56.

¹⁵ John MacArthur, *The MacArthur Commentary Series: Romans 9-16*, 67.

¹⁶ Farley, 49.

- How can we tell the difference between a desire for holiness and when we act legalistically?
- Does it bring more burden? Do you feel prideful after the event? Does your love for Christ grow or your confidence in self?
- **Galatians 2:19** “For through the Law I died to the Law, so that I might live to God.”
 - Paul is saying that in order to live to God, we must die to the law.
 - “Paul and the apostles had let go of circumcision in order to take hold of Christ in its place, so any attempt to recover circumcision was, by necessity, an attempt to displace Christ.”¹⁷
- **Galatians 2:21** “I do not nullify the grace of God, for if righteousness comes through the Law, then Christ died needlessly.”
 - “Christ did not come to give people the possibility or the chance at salvation; he came to save his people from the wrath of God: actually, finally, completely, eternally, and immutably.”¹⁸
- Make no mistake, we are to strive for holiness, to kill sin, and to walk in righteousness. But we are not doing all of this for God’s favor. It is because of what Christ has done for us already that we can live for glory of God.

Antinomianism

- This is the belief that Christians are saved by grace and no longer need to adhere to the law of God.
 - The phrase literally means *anti* (against) and *nomos* (law). It was used by Luther to define those who took the doctrine of justification by faith to an unbiblical extreme.
- Many people call others *antinomian* if they are not preaching the 10 Commandments or if they believe that today we are under grace.
- Again, this phrase is rarely used properly. In most cases, people use this phrase because they heard someone else say it or they read it in a book somewhere.
- To truly hold to this position, one has to believe that the OT law is completely obsolete and has no binding whatsoever on a believer’s conduct.
- Since grace covers everything, how a believer lives has no consequence; they are under grace.
- The idea of repentance after salvation is also not taught. Once one is born again, there is no reason to be repentant since you are already forgiven.
- Since this belief is (rightly) classified as heresy, you don’t see this label on those teaching in churches today.

¹⁷ J. V. Fesko, *Galatians*, ed. Jon D. Payne, The Lectio Continua Expository Commentary on the New Testament (Powder Springs, GA: Tolle Lege Press, 2012), 36.

¹⁸ Ibid., 37.

- Rather, you would hear teachings that promote hyper-grace or free-grace theology. Also, those who teach that our morality is not important to God, minor sins are okay, we're just human, and teaching that repentance is not important.
- This is obviously dangerous as it not only promotes a sinful lifestyle, but it also gives someone a false sense of salvation.
- **Romans 6:1-2** "What shall we say then? Are we to continue in sin so that grace may increase? {2} May it never be! How shall we who died to sin still live in it?"
- **Galatians 5:13** "For you were called to freedom, brethren; only do not turn your freedom into an opportunity for the flesh, but through love serve one another."
- **Jude 1:4** "For certain persons have crept in unnoticed, those who were long beforehand marked out for this condemnation, ungodly persons who turn the grace of our God into licentiousness and deny our only Master and Lord, Jesus Christ."

HOW DO WE VIEW THE LAW IN OUR DAILY LIVING?

- "The active obedience of Christ is...what we need to preach to ourselves every day. It solves our need for perfection."¹⁹
- **2 Corinthians 5:21** "He made Him who knew no sin to be sin on our behalf, so that we might become the righteousness of God in Him."
- God still requires perfection to enter into heaven. His standards have not lowered or lessened. Mankind is just as sinful today as when the law was given. The problem has not changed, but neither has the solution.
- Do Christians need to live in strict adherence to the law in order for God to accept them? No, they do not.
- Instead of learning the law to gain favor from God, there are principles that we can learn and apply so that we can learn more about God and how to imitate Him.
- "Give up on perfection. You can't produce it. Seek godliness with all your heart, but rest in the truth that, God will accept your best efforts even though they are imperfect. Most Christians waste a lot of time beating themselves up because they don't meeting their own standards, let alone God's."²⁰
- This truth of our salvation brings us rest. Not a rest as a lack of activity or care or a rest from obeying what God's commands are.

¹⁹ William P. Farley, *Hidden in the Gospel: Truths You Forget to Tell Yourself Every Day*, 50.

²⁰ Ibid., 49.

- It brings a rest that will actually motivate our hearts to obey, it will motivate our minds to know more and more about who God is and what He requires.
- This is not done out of fear of not being saved, but out of gratitude for being saved already.

What law are Christians under today?

- We know that the law cannot save anyone; it is not for our justification.
- **Romans 8:2** “For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has set you free from the law of sin and of death.”
- **1 Corinthians 9:21** “...to those who are without law, as without law, though not being without the law of God but under the law of Christ, so that I might win those who are without law.”
- **Galatians 6:2** “Bear one another's burdens, and thereby fulfill the law of Christ.”
- **1 Timothy 1:8-11** “But we know that the Law is good, if one uses it lawfully, 9 realizing the fact that law is not made for a righteous person, 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 10 and immoral men and homosexuals and kidnappers and liars and perjurers, and whatever else is contrary to sound teaching, 11 according to the glorious gospel of the blessed God, with which I have been entrusted.”
- **Hebrews 7:12** “For when the priesthood is changed, of necessity there takes place a change of law also.”
- We are now, as Christians, under the law of Christ.
 - But the Bible nowhere clearly or specifically defines what the law of Christ is for us.
 - There is not a set of rules and restrictions set forth in the New Testament of how the church is to live under the law of Christ.
- Jesus did say in **Mark 12:28-31** “One of the scribes came and heard them arguing, and recognizing that He had answered them well, asked Him, 'What commandment is the foremost of all?' 29 Jesus answered, 'The foremost is, 'HEAR, O ISRAEL! THE LORD OUR GOD IS ONE LORD; 30 AND YOU SHALL LOVE THE LORD YOUR GOD WITH ALL YOUR HEART, AND WITH ALL YOUR SOUL, AND WITH ALL YOUR MIND, AND WITH ALL YOUR STRENGTH.' 31 'The second is this, 'YOU SHALL LOVE YOUR NEIGHBOR AS YOURSELF.' There is no other commandment greater than these.'”
- “The law of Christ, then, is to love God with all of our being and to love our neighbors as we love ourselves. In this, Jesus and the scribe agreed that those two commands are the core of the entire Old Testament Law. All of the Old Testament Law can be placed in the category of “loving God” or “loving your neighbor.” For the follower of Christ, the avoidance of sin is to be accomplished out of love for God and love for others. Love is to be our motivation. When we recognize the value of Jesus’ sacrifice on our behalf, our response is to be love, gratitude, and obedience. When we understand the sacrifice Jesus made for us and others, our

response is to be to follow His example in expressing love to others. Our motivation for overcoming sin should be love, not a desire to legalistically obey a series of commandments. We are to obey the law of Christ because we love Him, not so that we can check off a list of commands that we successfully obeyed.”²¹

- **Augustine (354 – 430)**
 - He famously noted that while the Mosaic Law was written on stone tablets to constrain outward behavior through fear, the law of Christ is written on human hearts by the Holy Spirit, enabling obedience through love and grace rather than a legalistic code.
- **John Chrysostom (d. 407)**
 - Chrysostom taught that the law of Christ is fulfilled when believers actively sacrifice their own comfort to restore and help hurting neighbors. To him, the "law" was a lifestyle of humility, copying how Christ carried the ultimate burden of human sin.
- **Irenaeus of Lyons (130 - ?)**
 - Irenaeus asserted that Jesus stripped away the temporary, ceremonial burdens of the Mosaic Law (like dietary restrictions and sacrifices) but preserved and expanded the "natural precepts" of morality. For Irenaeus, the law of Christ is the original law of God unburdened by Jewish ritualism.
- **Justin Martyr (2nd century)** (the earliest extra-biblical writings that support the Millennial Kingdom)
 - He argued that the Mosaic Law was temporary and intended only for Israel. In contrast, the law of Christ is universal, final, and meant to govern the hearts of both Jews and Gentiles worldwide through faith.
 - “I and others, who are **right-minded Christians on all points**, are assured that there will be a resurrection of the dead, and a thousand years in Jerusalem.”
- **From 500AD – 1500AD** was the rule of the Roman Catholic Church and they enacted a new law. Grace was not grace for salvation but given through the 7 sacraments. There was also now the penitential system; a way to pay off sin debts through confession, fasting, pilgrimages, purgatory, etc.
- The Reformers in the 1500’s came up with the 3 uses of the law (as we discussed earlier).
- **Luther:** the law primarily exposes sin or curbs evil, he did not want to fall back into legalism (RCC)
 - Believers now obey Christ’s moral standards because they are now free and thankful.
- **Calvin:** the law acts as a guiding principle for believer’s progressive sanctification.
 - Salvation is by grace alone, but true faith must inevitably produce a lifestyle of orderly obedience.
 - There is order and obedience in the believer’s life as they live according to the Scriptures.

²¹ <https://www.gotquestions.org/law-of-Christ.html>

How the new covenant believer benefits from the law²²

- So, in order for the New Covenant believer to benefit from the Law, I would propose the believer seeks to obey the principle of the Law (rather than the letter of the Law) by following these three steps.
- **Example: Deuteronomy 22:8** “When you build a new house, you shall make a parapet for your roof, so that you will not bring bloodguilt on your house if anyone falls from it.”

1. Determine the original meaning, significance, and purpose of the law.

- The first step is to examine the original meaning of the law in question through the exegetical process.
- **Example:** While not prominent in our culture, the flat roofs in Israel provided a place for people to gather together. So, God told them to make a parapet (walls, fence) on the roof so that people wouldn't fall off.

2. Trace the theological significance of the law.

- Thus, proper appropriation of any law must involve identifying the context of the law and discerning the theological significance behind that law by tracing it back to God or the created order.
- **Example:** This is a practical way to not break the 6th Commandment; you shall not murder. Ultimately, it is also giving the principle that we should be active in preserving life. This is grounded in creation as man is created in the image of God and God forbids the unlawful taking of life (Gen. 9:5-6)

3. Determine the application and implication of the theology of the law.

- Based on the previous steps, one should be able to ascertain the theology and/or wisdom about God or the created order from the specific law in question. It is helpful in this step to be able to utilize the NT and see if any NT author makes reference or allusion to the theological application of the law.
- **Example:** Most of us are not living on our roof. However, the principle is applicable in many scenarios. Having a car with functioning seat belts, having a fence or a pool cover in order to protect children from falling into an in-ground pool and drowning—these would be appropriate applications of this principle of preserving life.

²² <https://petergoeman.com/following-the-principle-of-the-law/>