

External obedience arises out of the remnants of the image of God in man; and is motivated by fear or by selfish considerations or by natural love to fellow human beings.

Internal obedience arises out of the recreated image of God in the regenerate person; and is motivated by spiritual love to God, to fellow believers, and to non-believers, and by a desire to bring God glory.

It may properly be asked, "What is the value of external obedience, since 'those who are in the flesh cannot please God'?" (Romans 8:8). And it should be frankly admitted that as a condition of pleasing God, external obedience is futile. God's Law requires internal obedience from the heart, not mere external conformity.

But simply because external obedience to God's Law is futile as a condition of pleasing God, does this mean that external obedience is of no value at all?

For example, let us ask the following questions in relation to the Ten Commandments:

- (1) Is it of no value for persons to acknowledge, even externally, the existence of the supernatural, and of one Supreme Spiritual Being, God?
- (2) Is it of no value for human beings to acknowledge, even externally, that this one Supreme God is not to be worshipped by means of images and idols that draw attention and worship to themselves and away from Him?
- (3) Is it of no value for human beings to restrain themselves, even externally, from using God's name or Christ's name or the Holy Spirit's name in an irreverent, meaningless way, or from swearing, cursing, and using profanity? Is that of no value?
- (4) Is it of no value to have human beings, even externally, rest from occupational labor one day of the week, attend churches where the one true and living God is worshiped and proclaimed, and generally recognize that day as God's day or at least set apart in some special way?
- (5) Is it of no value, even externally, to train children to show honor to and respect their parents, or to have all persons show respect to those who are in authority over them?
- (6) Is it of no value to restrain human beings, even externally, from murdering or killing or hurting one another, or to protect persons, even externally, from harm by other persons?
- (7) Is it of no value to attempt to restrain human beings, even externally, from flagrant promiscuity, from adultery by easy divorce, and from the blatant display of sexual immorality and nudity in the mass media?
- (8) Is it of no value to restrain fellow human beings, even externally, from robbery, extortion, embezzlement, and cheating?