

(9) Is it of no value to restrain persons, even externally, from lying in promissory agreements and contracts, in courtroom settings, and in slanders and libels against the reputation or actions or words of their fellow citizens?

(10) Is it of no value, even externally, to try to persuade human beings to be content with their circumstances and possessions, not to allow ambition and greed to rule and consume their lives, and not to connive and scheme to get possession of their neighbor's possessions by immoral or unlawful means? Is that of no value?

Are these forms of external obedience to God's Law of no value? Or are they of considerable value? And if they are of value, to whom are they valuable?

Is external obedience to the Law of God of value to the person himself or herself? Yes, since external conformity to God's Law is better than sin and its consequences.

Is external obedience to the Law of God of value to other human beings? Yes, since it tends to protect others from external harm and wrong-doing, to encourage their cooperation and good order, and to restrain them from external sin and its consequences.

Is external obedience to the Law of God of value to God? Yes, since it keeps human beings from external harm to others, restrains them from more flagrant forms of sin, and from multiplying transgressions against His Law; preserves a greater degree of external righteousness and order and morality in His world; and paves the way for His gospel to be preached in a climate of peacefulness and good order.

After all, which is preferable: morality or immorality, decency or indecency, external safety or external fear and danger, faithfulness or unfaithfulness, honesty or stealing and cheating, trustworthiness or untrustworthiness, truthfulness or lying, contentment or dissatisfaction and unrest, order or chaos? The question is rhetorical; the answer is obvious!

- e. If external obedience is of value and is preferable, do believers have a responsibility to attempt to influence the moral conduct of the non-Christian members of their society for good? If so, on what basis does this responsibility rest?

In Romans 13:8-10 Paul writes, "Owe nothing to anyone except to love one another; for he who loves his neighbor has fulfilled the law. For this, 'You shall not commit adultery, you shall not murder, you shall not steal, you shall not covet,' and if there is any other commandment, it is summed up in this saying, 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself.' Love does no wrong to a neighbor; love therefore is the fulfillment of the law."

If as Christians we are bound to love our neighbors as ourselves, then it would seem to follow that we are bound by love to help our neighbors obey God's Law. To show how this implication follows let us consider some specific reasons.