

## Lesson 2

# THE LAW AND THE SINNER

### **Question 1: Whence do you know your sin and misery?**

**Answer:** I know my sin and misery from the law of God

**Rom. 3:20b** – for through the law cometh the knowledge of sin.

### **Question 2. What does God require of you in His law?**

**Answer:** Jesus said, “Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the great and first commandment. And the second like unto it is this, Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself. On these two commandments the whole law hangeth and the prophets” (Matthew 22:37 – 40).

### **Question 3. Are you able to keep God’s law?**

**Answer:** I am not able to keep God’s law, for by nature I am inclined to hate God and my neighbor, and to break God’s commandments in thought, word and deed.

**Rom. 8:7** – *Because the mind of the flesh is enmity against God; for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can it be.*



## **Knowledge of Sin**

God’s law is His will for our lives. God has a perfect right to give us His law because He made us. We are obligated to obey His law because we are His creatures.

In the Old Testament God gave *ceremonial laws*, which governed the religious life of Israel. The *civil laws* applied to the national life of Israel. These laws were meant for that day and that peculiar nation; they no longer apply to the New Testament period. But the Ten Commandments, the *Moral Law*, applies to all ages and people. In it God has laid down the requirements for all human conduct and action.

The moral law can be summarized in one word: Love. This commandment is directed at our heart, and small wonder, for out of the heart are the issues of life (Proverbs 4:23). Love for God is fundamental. And where there is love for God, there will be love for self and for the neighbor.

It is from this perfect law of love that we learn our sinfulness. How could we know it is a sin to covet, to bear false witness, to make images if God had not told us? In the law God shows what love implies, and how our love should be properly directed. If God had not given His law, we would not know what He requires of us. But now, as we examine ourselves before the mirror of the law, our uncleanness and impurity are seen. A high standard is set before us, and we fall far short of meeting its requirements.

## **II. Our Inability**

An honest self-examination in the light of the law leads us to confess, “I am not able to keep God’s law, for by nature I am inclined to hate . . .”

We are not only confessing that we do not keep the law of God. We are also confessing that we are *not able* to keep the law. It is not merely a question of poor performance. It is a matter of inability. Even though we strive with all our hearts, we must still say, "I am not able."

Our inability to keep God's law is due to our sinful nature. The sinful depraved nature with which we are born makes this obedience impossible. This condition is not limited to a few of the worst sinners. All men are sinful and depraved. "There is none righteous, no, not one." (Romans 3:10).

We are not only unable to keep God's law, but we are even inclined to hate God and our neighbor. Apart from God's grace we hate Him, the God of Scripture, the Father of Jesus Christ. And we hate our neighbor too. We are selfish, self-centered. That hatred does not always break out in all its fury. But the inclination is always there; the whole tendency of our lives is to selfishness and hatred.

All this we learn when we look at ourselves in the light of God's law. It is a sorry picture. How greatly we need God's saving help.