

Three Purposes (or Uses) of God's Law

We must remember that God always speaks to us in Law and Gospel. Just because we might like the Gospel more than the Law, we can't ignore it. In fact, God has given us His Law for some very good purposes.

Deut. 10:12-13 ESV "And now, Israel, what does the LORD your God require of you, but to fear the LORD your God, to walk in all his ways, to love him, to serve the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul,¹³ and to keep the commandments and statutes of the LORD, which I am commanding you today **for your good**?"

1) God's Law acts as a _____

What does a curb do?

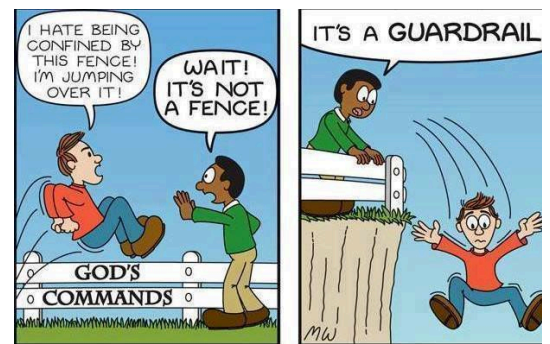
So in what way does God's Law act as a curb?



**** Remember** just like a curb does not prevent an out of control car from jumping up the curb and going onto the sidewalk, but it can help deter it. So, too, God's Law works on our hearts to deter evil behavior but it does not prevent it 100%.

This use of the Law is sometimes called the "civil" or "political" use of the Law.

Rom. 13:3-4 ESV - For rulers are not a terror to good conduct, but to bad. Would you have no fear of the one who is in authority? Then do what is good, and you will receive his approval,⁴ for he is God's servant for your good. But if you do wrong, be afraid, for he does not bear the sword in vain. For he is the servant of God, an avenger who carries out God's wrath on the wrongdoer.



Whoever keeps commandments keeps their life,
but whoever shows contempt for their ways will die.
- PROVERBS 19:16

2) God's Law acts as a _____

What does a mirror do?

So in what way does God's Law act as a mirror?



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This use of the Law is sometimes called the “theological” use of the Law. It shows us our standing before God and our need for the Gospel.

- **Jas. 2:10 ESV** For whoever keeps the whole law but fails in one point has become guilty of all of it.
- **Rom. 3:23 ESV** for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God,
- **Rom. 3:20 ESV** For by works of the law no human being will be justified in his sight, since through the law comes knowledge of sin.
- **Matt. 5:21-22 ESV** "You have heard that it was said to those of old, 'You shall not murder; and whoever murders will be liable to judgment.'²² But I say to you that everyone who is angry with his brother will be liable to judgment; whoever insults his brother will be liable to the council; and whoever says, 'You fool!' will be liable to the hell of fire.
- **Gal. 3:10 ESV** For all who rely on works of the law are under a curse; for it is written, "Cursed be everyone who does not abide by all things written in the Book of the Law, and do them."
- **Gal. 3:24 ESV** So then, the law was our guardian until Christ came, in order that we might be justified by faith.
- **Rom. 10:13 ESV** For "everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved."

3) God's Law acts as a _____

What does a guide do?



So in what way does God's Law act as a guide?

As Christians, the Law can guide us into this new way of living, but at the same time because we are sinners, the Law will still be a mirror for us, showing us the ways we fall short. Ultimately, we must remember that the Law provides no comfort for us. Only the Good News of the Gospel does that.

Matt. 5:43-45 ESV [Jesus said,] "You have heard that it was said, 'You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy.'⁴⁴ But I say to you, Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you,⁴⁵ so that you may be sons of your Father who is in heaven. For he makes his sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the just and on the unjust.

When we find that we are not moved to love this way, and do not have these higher aspirations, we need to repent and call on Christ, for His forgiveness and a new heart. And in the Gospel, this is what God freely gives us.