

# INTRODUCTION

It is becoming increasingly obvious that the evangelistic efforts of the Christian Church, with all its various denominations, are unable to keep pace with the population growth. This is true, not so much because the Church is failing to evangelize, but because so many of its converts have no staying power. The statistics of that fact are very disheartening. At best, only 20% of present-day converts to Christianity persevere<sup>1</sup>. What is of grave concern is that the remaining 80% have lapsed back into a former lifestyle. The Christian word for this action is Backsliding.

Over 100 years ago, under the ministry of Charles G. Finney, those statistics were completely reversed<sup>2</sup>. Less than 20% resorted to their old ways while over 80% continued in their walk with Jesus. Why this distinction? The difference lies in the way evangelistic efforts have been conducted. I am not speaking of mass evangelism versus personal evangelism; nor am I speaking of actual methods of evangelism like handing out tracts or inviting unsaved individuals into our homes. I am speaking of the *content* of our message.

If you held in your hands two methods to guarantee you a measure of success and one stated that you had a 20% chance for success and the other stated that you had an 80% chance for success, which would you choose? The answer is obviously 80%. Yet, the Christian Church has, in the past 100 or so years, consistently chosen the 20/80 ratio; and, as a result, statistics<sup>3</sup> show that most people who profess Christ either seriously backslide or never follow through.

What in the world is wrong with Christianity that it has only a 20% success ratio? Why is there so much fleshly living among Christians today? Some will say that it is simply a sign of the times and quote Scripture to back up this belief, such as Matthew 24:12, and because iniquity shall abound, the love of many shall wax cold. Paul warned Timothy of much the same when he prophesied that in the last days difficult times would come, and that humanity would be consumed with itself rather than God. They would, in fact, be so self-centered that their primary focus would be on their own pleasure.<sup>4</sup>

While it is true that these things have been prophesied, it is equally true that the love of many waxing cold is not the **result** of Prophecy. I am sure there are many who use those scriptures as both the reason and the excuse for things being as they are, but the reason for these occurrences is different from the fact that they have been foretold. Those who fall away do so of their own volition, not because it was prophesied that they would.

What has changed in our presentation of the Gospel message that gives rise to such alarming statistics? The answer to that question may have an impact in our local church, in our community, in our own circle of influence, and ultimately in the entire body of the cross-denominational church.

## I. THE REALITY OF OUR FAILURE

The Old Testament prophet, Hosea, in prophesying to Israel said,

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<sup>1</sup> Comfort, Ray; [Hell's Best Kept Secret](#); Pg. 9.

<sup>2</sup> Finney, Charles G.; [Finney's Systematic Theology](#); Forward by Harry Conn, 1976.

<sup>3</sup> Comfort, Ray; *Ibid.*

<sup>4</sup> 2 Timothy 3:1-5

My people are destroyed from lack of knowledge. Because you have rejected knowledge, I will also reject you as my priest; because you have ignored (forgotten) the law of your God, I will also ignore (forget) your children ~Hosea 4:6.

The word “destroyed” here means: *to fail or perish*. Would you agree that many today are failing in their walk? But the failing is not just in our walk. It is a failing, according to Hosea, in our *knowledge!* God gets very specific when He talks about this failing. The people of God were failing because *knowledge* was failing; knowledge was failing because knowledge was *rejected*. This word “rejected” means *to refuse*, or *to despise*. In many circles today, knowledge is rejected in favor of experience. In other instances, knowledge is rejected because it doesn’t fit into a pre-conceived theological framework. What knowledge is being rejected? It is the knowledge of the Law: “...seeing you have forgotten the Law of your God.@ (Hosea 4:6 -KJV). The word “rejected” can also be translated “despised” or “spurned” and is first used in Leviticus 26:15-17. In that passage God gave explicit information regarding what would happen to Israel if they *spurned* His Law. He told them that He would set His face against them and that they would be slain by their enemies.

Another reason why this aspect of knowledge has been rejected today, and perhaps the root of the other two reasons cited above, is because of our misunderstanding of Romans 6:14, “... You are not under law but under grace.”, and Romans 7:4, “So, my brothers, you also died to the law through the body of Christ...” We have concluded that since we are “not under law”, and that we are “dead to the law”, we no longer have a relationship or responsibility to the Law. It is not the Law that died. We died to the Law (see Romans 6). We fail to remember the words of Jesus, “I have not come to abolish them but to fulfill them [the Law]” (Matthew 5:17). It is the height of presumption to think that Christians have nothing to do with the Law anymore! Romans 7:4 goes on to tell us that the reason we are dead to the Law is so that we could be married to another Christ! By no means are we to assume that the Law is no longer to have a valid place in our lives. We have simply moved to another dimension, namely, that we are now *free to obey* the Law in spirit (see Romans 7:6). Again, it is *we* who have died, not *the Law!* What are we talking about when we talk about the Law? ...The Ten Commandments.

In 1990, Cable TV mogul Ted Turner proclaimed himself “news king” and declared the Ten Commandments obsolete. Turner, creator of Cable News Network (CNN), told members of the National Newspaper Association in Atlanta that the biblical Ten Commandments do not relate to current global problems, such as overpopulation and the arms race.

We’re living with outmoded rules, the rules we’re living under (are) the Ten Commandments, and I bet nobody here even pays much attention to ‘em, because they are too old. When Moses went up on the mountain, there were no nuclear weapons, there was no poverty. Today, the Commandments wouldn’t go over. Nobody around likes to be commanded. Commandments are out.<sup>5</sup>

It appears Mr. Turner struck a chord with others in this nation.

These are dark days for the Ten Commandments. It’s not just that people go around breaking them all the time (nothing new there), but that so few of us seem able to

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<sup>5</sup> Parson’s Technology; Bible Illustrator for Windows, Ver.2.0b 8/1993-1997.

remember what these oft-broken rules actually say. In 1994, a survey of 1,200 people, ages 15 to 35, found that most of those polled could name no more than two commandments, and as the essayist Cullen Murphy writes, “They weren’t too happy about some of the others when they were told about them.” Surely it is time to spruce up these 3,000-year-old Commandments and render them memorable and pleasing. ... One way out of this search for command-free commandments is simply to focus on niceness. ... New Age people have been working overtime to create fresh commandments. Shirley MacLaine offers us two in her book Dancing In The Light: “Know that you are God and Know that you are the universe.” Since everybody is God, she might want us to retain the original First Commandment as a celebration of self.<sup>6</sup>

James Madison, the fourth President of the United States stated, “We stake the future of this country on our ability to govern ourselves under the principles of the Ten Commandments.”<sup>7</sup> It is, however, all too clear that times have changed.

Without a doubt, this nation is in serious trouble regarding its ability to govern itself because of the Supreme Court’s ruling that effectively removed the Ten Commandments from our public schools.<sup>8</sup> Unfortunately, that removal was foreshadowed by the removal of the Law from the doctrine of modern Christianity. Paris Reidhead says, “When 100 years ago earnest scholars decreed that the Law had no relationship to the preaching of the gospel, they deprived the Holy Ghost ... of the only instrument with which He had ever armed Himself to prepare sinners for Grace.”<sup>9</sup>

## II. THE REASONS FOR OUR FAILURE

According to Hosea 4:6, two reasons are given for this failure. First, we have *rejected* knowledge. This rejection can be either deliberate, because we do not want to have to deal with learning the things of God; or an oversight brought about by wrong theology. Regardless of the motivation in our rejection, it *must* be corrected by restructuring our thoughts concerning the Law of God. It is, of course, easier to correct if the rejection arises from true ignorance. If, on the other hand, our rejection is as it was here in Hosea 4, it is in effect rebellion! In the natural realm, we say that ignorance of our man-made Laws is no excuse. The same truth applies in the Spiritual realm. We are responsible for the truths in God’s Word.

The second reason Hosea gives for our failure is that we have not *remembered* God’s Law. Psychologists tell us that our brains record everything; every thought, everything we see, everything we touch or smell, everything we hear. It’s all recorded. Our brains hold an incredible amount of data. Considering this fact, we don’t forget. We just fail to remember. That is not an exercise in semantics. God instructed His people to put reminders in place so that they would not fail to remember His Law. He told them to keep His words in their heart and to teach them to their

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<sup>6</sup> U.S. News & World Report, November 18, 1996; John Leo, Thou shalt not command.

<sup>7</sup> Parson=s Technology; Ibid.

<sup>8</sup> Stone v. Graham, 449 U.S.39 (1980)

<sup>9</sup> Comfort, Ray; Ibid; Pg. 56.

children. He told them that His words were to be discussed in their homes and were to become a vital part of their day-to-day lives, so much so, that they were to inscribe the door frame of their houses with His words.<sup>10</sup> We do much the same thing today in our daily activities. We use post-it notes to remind ourselves of appointments or things we want to do; but what have we done to remind ourselves of God's Law?

## **The Purpose of the Law**

What is the purpose of the Law? According to Scripture, the Law has at least a three-fold purpose:

1. The Law gives us *Insight Regarding our Standing*.
2. The Law gives us *Information Regarding our Sin*.
3. The Law is our *Instructor Revealing our Need for a Savior*.

### **1. Insight Regarding our Standing**

One of the things we desire to know is how we appear to our employer or instructor or friend or our spouse. I believe that desire is also true in the spiritual realm. We want to know what God thinks of us. What is our standing? How do we measure up? Dwight L. Moody, an American evangelist from 1875-1899 said,

God, being a perfect God, had to give a perfect Law, and the Law was given not to save men, but to measure them. I want you to understand this clearly, because I believe hundreds and thousands stumble at this point... Ask Paul why it was given. Here is his answer 'that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God'. The Law stops every man's mouth. I can always tell a man who is near the kingdom of God; his mouth is stopped. This, then, is why God gives us the Law, to show us ourselves in our true colors.<sup>11</sup>

Not only does the Law of God show us that we are guilty and without excuse in His sight, the Law also gives us information regarding our sin.

### **2. Information Regarding our Sin**

When the Apostle Paul said that he would not have known about coveting unless he had read it in the Law, that's the Law informing him of his sin. He also stated, "...for by the Law is the knowledge of sin." ~Romans 3:20.

A.B.Earle, an evangelist who wrote the hymn *Bringing in the Sheaves*, states,

I have found by long experience that the severest threatenings of the Law of God have a prominent place in leading men to Christ. They must see themselves *lost* before they will cry for mercy. They will not escape from danger until they see it<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> Deuteronomy 6:6-9

<sup>11</sup> Comfort, Ray; Ibid; Pg. 29.

<sup>12</sup> Comfort, Ray; Ibid; Pg. 25.

~Emphasis added.

Knowledge of sin is critical to our understanding the gospel. Not just a knowledge of the fact that we *have* sinned, but knowledge regarding the specifics *of* our sin. In other words, we need to know *how* we have sinned. It is this lack of knowledge that ushers many into a Christ-less eternity! The Law is also our Instructor revealing our need for a Savior.

### 3. The Law as an Instructor Revealing our Need for a Savior

**Galatians 3:24** So the law was put in charge to lead us to Christ that we might be justified by faith....

Charles Haddon Spurgeon (1834-1882), perhaps one of the best-known preachers of his day and of modern times, was also a prolific writer and believed that the Law was crucial to bringing sinners into full repentance.

Lower the Law, and you dim the light by which man perceives his guilt. This is a very serious loss to the sinner, rather than a gain; for it lessens the likelihood of his conviction and conversion ... I say you have deprived the gospel of its ablest auxiliary when you have set aside the Law....<sup>13</sup>

In the United States, Charles G. Finney was being mightily used by God to bring many into the Kingdom. Between 1827 and 1832 Finney's revivals swept cities like New York, Philadelphia, Boston and Rochester, New York.<sup>14</sup>

Students of revivals agree that the greatest evangelist since apostolic times was the tenderhearted and devoted Charles Grandison Finney, 1792-1875. His revivals were known for the presence of the Holy Spirit, great enlightenment of the human mind with the truth of God, deep conviction of sin and sinners having a saving subjective experience based upon objective truth. ... It is a deficiency of the ministry that very few servants of our Lord in this day understand his theology when the results of preaching in our day are almost the opposite of Finney's results.<sup>15</sup>

Finney's preaching and teaching stressed the moral government of God.<sup>16</sup> He had this to say about the place of the Law in conversion,

If you have an *unconverted* sinner, *convict* him. If you have a *convicted* sinner, *convert* him. ... By a *convicted* sinner, I mean one who feels himself condemned by the Law of God, as a guilty sinner.<sup>17</sup> ~Emphasis added.

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<sup>13</sup> Comfort, Ray; Ibid. Pg. 12-13.

<sup>14</sup> Douglas, J.D.; Who's Who in Christian History; Pg.248.

<sup>15</sup> Finney, Charles G.,Ibid.

<sup>16</sup> Douglas, J.D.; Ibid.

<sup>17</sup> Comfort, Ray; Ibid. Pg. 25.

Unfortunately, we have skipped some steps in our efforts to evangelize. Oh yes, we teach acknowledgment that we are sinners in need of a Savior; but, the Holy Spirit has rarely been given the opportunity to do His initial work in bringing sinners to repentance. We have meant well, but we, like the prophets in Jeremiah's day, have run without being sent. The minute someone seeks relief from the strong conviction of the Holy Spirit, we try to appease their guilt and comfort their sorrow. Ray Comfort calls this process "inoculation against Christianity".<sup>18</sup> They get just enough of the Gospel to feel safe; and, as a result, they become immune to further conviction of the Holy Spirit.

### III. THE *RESULTS* OF OUR FAILURE

As a result of Israel's failure to remember the Law, God brought judgment on their nation. The Bible clearly states that the Old Testament is an example to New Testament believers (Hebrews 4:11). The purpose of an example is to show the reality of truth in a similar setting. When we apply this thought to Christianity and the fact that the things that happened to Israel are to be examples to us, then we can apply these words from Hosea to ourselves and hear God state that He will do two things:

#### 1. God Will *Reject* Us From Being His Priests

We need to remember that in this New Testament era, we are a Kingdom of priests (1 Peter 2:5-9) and our purpose is to do the service of a Priest before God's throne. Besides spending a lot of time offering sacrifices, what did the Old Testament priests do?

##### **Priests inspired the people of God in worship**

Old Testament priests were instrumental in leading the people in worship. Much like the worship leaders of today, Old Testament priests were familiar with the music of their times and led the people in the singing of psalms of praise.

God is stating here that we will be rejected in *that* service because we have rejected His Law. In other words, we will not be able to minister in the *Holy things*. We may be involved in worship, but our worship will be worthless to God. "Worthless worship" is an oxymoron, since one of the aspects of worship is to increase the worth of the individual (or thing) worshipped. If this is our practice, then we will be on the outside edge of what is going on. We will be left out – do you ever get that feeling?

##### **Priests interceded for God's people**

Another part of the priests' responsibility in the Temple was to make sure that the Altar of Incense was kept burning. *That* altar was symbolic of intercessory prayer. In Revelation, we are given a picture of an Angel with a golden censor standing before the altar; and, he was given much incense to be offered up before God, along with the prayers of the saints (Revelation 8:3).

Very rarely do we equate our prayers with the Law, yet there is a dynamic relationship between the two. "If anyone turns a deaf ear to the Law, *even his prayers are detestable.*" (Proverbs 28:9) ~Emphasis added. Could this be a reason why there is so much ineffectiveness in our prayers? I

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<sup>18</sup> Ibid; Pg. 12.

am sure that we do not want our prayers to be considered *detestable* by God; and, since His Word is Truth, we need to give *heed* to this aspect of His Word.

### **Priests instructed God's people in the Law**

It was part of the priests' responsibility to teach the Law to the people and to give an interpretation of that Law. Our modern counterpart would perhaps be the preaching portion of our worship services. One of the reasons God brought judgment on both Israel and Judah was because the priests had neglected this portion of their duties. Even after their captivity in Babylon, God had to rebuke them again through the prophet Malachi. God said,

"...And now this admonition is for you, O priests. <sup>2</sup> If you do not listen, and if you do not set your heart to honor my name,' says the LORD Almighty, 'I will send a curse upon you, and I will curse your blessings. Yes, I have already cursed them, because you have not set your heart to honor me. <sup>3</sup> Because of you I will rebuke your descendants; I will spread on your faces the offal from your festival sacrifices, and you will be carried off with it. ... <sup>7</sup> For *the lips of a priest ought to preserve knowledge*, and from his mouth men should seek instruction because he is the messenger of the LORD Almighty. <sup>8</sup> But you have turned from the way and by your teaching have caused many to stumble; you have violated the covenant with Levi,' says the LORD Almighty." (Malachi 2:7-8) ~Emphasis added.

In other words, of all people, the priests should have been practicing what they preached. For example, during the time of Ezra, the priests had intermarried with the Canaanite women in direct violation of the Law. People have a right to expect the practice to match what is preached. If unbelievers don't get the truth of God's Law from Christians, from whom are they going to get it? Is it any wonder that things are so messed up in our society? If most Christians don't know how to relate to the Law of God, how in the world can we expect others to have success in finding a relationship with God? We will be on the outside edge of what is going on; we will be left out.

We have seen that if we do not give the Law its rightful place in our lives, God will reject us in our priestly duties. The second thing He will do is even more pertinent and perhaps more frightening,

## **2. God Will Not Remember Our Children.**

This is especially relevant in the present day when there is so much talk of Generation X.

What makes them (Generation Xer's) unique is that they are the first generation to grow up in a post-Christian America. ... There are almost 40 million individuals that make up Generation X. They are the children of divorce, with 50 percent coming from broken homes; and they are the children of two-job families, where parents often were not around. ... Having grown up amidst headlines about fallen televangelists and crooked politicians, Xer's trust in authority figures is low, and cynicism of anything organized, like the church and political parties, is high. 'What's so sad,' says Brenda Salter McNeir, an urban specialist with InterVarsity Christian Fellowship, 'is that when politicians or church leaders fall, Busters (another term for Generation X) aren't even shocked; they've come to expect it.' It is no wonder that MTV's Beavis and Butthead's cynical, irreverent, and nihilistic

views of the world are so appealing to Xers. ... 'Busters need to see the Gospel lived out in community,' says Leighton Ford.<sup>19</sup>

"Eighty-one percent of Busters don't believe there's absolute truth" reports Barna.<sup>20</sup> With those sobering thoughts in mind, the Christian Church is on the verge of losing a whole generation because it has not taken seriously, and as absolute, the Commandments God gave. Is it possible that what we are seeing with Generation X is a fulfillment of God's Word through Hosea, that He will not remember our children? When what is seen is not congruent with what is heard, the message suffers. "For Xers, 'the Great Commandments are much more compelling than the Great Commission,' says Bob Fryling, InterVarsity's Campus Ministries Director."<sup>21</sup>

It is God's pattern to bring blessing and display mercy on the children because of the integrity of parents. For example, in 1 Kings 11:34, when God was pronouncing judgment against Solomon for his idolatry, God showed leniency to him with these words: "I will make him a prince all the days of his life for David, my servant's sake..." We have said that it is inconceivable for us to think that God would forget His children. He's not forgetting *His* children. He's just failing to remember *ours*. In other words, we are getting back what we have given out.

By the time Hosea appeared on the scene, some 400 years after Solomon, the situation in Israel had deteriorated to the point that God was on the verge of pronouncing judgment. What God is saying here to Israel, through the prophet in Hosea 4:6, is that there is no longer any basis for His remembering their children in the way He did with David's children. He will not extend that privilege if His people are not going to walk with Him. As then, so now, God does not change! So, what's the point? We **must** give the Law its rightful place both in our daily lives and in our evangelistic efforts! John Wesley said: "Before I can preach love, mercy, and grace, I must preach sin, law, and judgment."<sup>22</sup>

What is our attitude towards the Law of God? What place does the Law hold in our lives? In our attempt to stem the tide of legalism, we have become guilty of *rejecting knowledge* and are now in danger of *God rejecting our service*. We have failed to *remember God's Law*, and now we are experiencing God's judgment in His refusal to *remember our children*.

One of the beliefs I have consistently encountered among Christians is that it is *impossible* to keep the Law. This belief seems to have developed from a wrong understanding of (Hebrews 7:19) "For the law made nothing perfect..."; and (Romans 3:20) "...by the deeds of the law shall no flesh be justified." This philosophy arises from the reasoning that since the Law cannot bring perfection, and since the Law cannot justify me, what is the sense of even trying to keep it? Ergo, it's impossible to keep it! There are two things that need to be addressed here in relation to this perspective.

First, we have confused the doctrine of justification with the "works of the Law". While we recognize that we are "justified by faith" (Romans 5:1), we have substituted the *Law's* inability for *our* inability. Why have we done that? Partially because we do not want to fall into the error of the Scribes and Pharisees of Jesus' day who elevated the Law into the position that it would justify them; and partially because we view the *weakness of our flesh* mentioned in Romans 8:3 as being

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<sup>19</sup> Christianity Today, Cover Story, 9/12/94

<sup>20</sup> Ibid.

<sup>21</sup> Ibid.

<sup>22</sup> Comfort, Ray; Ibid; Pg. 23.

a fundamental *inability* to meet the requirements of the Law. Nowhere are we told that we are *unable* to keep the Law, only that the Law is unable to justify us because it works through corrupted flesh. We also tend to “forget” the Law because we do not have a correct understanding of righteousness. The only *righteousness* that God will accept is the righteousness that is resulting from active faith. Since the *righteousness of the Law* is not solely what God is looking for, we eliminate the Law! In essence, we have thrown the proverbial baby out with the bath water. The *purpose* of the Law is to reveal our sin and lead us to Christ. Just because it was never designed to make us acceptable to God is no reason to discard it completely.

Secondly, we must take seriously what Paul told the Christians of Rome. After telling them of the *Law's* inability to generate perfection (because of weak flesh), he tells them of the work of the Spirit in the life of the believer with regard to the Law. God's goal in the life of the Spirit-filled believer is that the righteous requirements of the Law might be fulfilled in us (Romans 8:4).

When we consider verses like the above, we are too quick to set them aside as impossible to perform. We must also give due weight to the words and beliefs of Charles G. Finney whose converts were more consistent in their walk than present-day Christians. Finney addressed a person's ability to keep the Law with the following statement:

That which the precept (Law) demands ***must be possible to the subject***. That which demands a natural impossibility is not, and cannot be, moral law. The true definition of law excludes the supposition that it can, under any circumstances, demand absolute impossibility. Such a demand could not be in accordance with the nature and relations of moral agents; and, therefore, practicability must always be an attribute of moral law. *To talk of inability to obey moral law is to talk nonsense.*<sup>23</sup> ~Emphasis added.

Finney's reasoning was that it is absurd that God would demand from His creation that which they are unable to produce. Such a demand would not only be unreasonable but also impractical. In order for this Law to be moral it must be attainable. One of the things consistently neglected in discipleship is the Law.

Jesus told us that we are to “make disciples.” (Matthew 28:19-20). How did He deal with discipleship? Discipleship is the result of teaching; and, in order to do this, Jesus first determined where an individual was in relation to the Law. He didn't just present the Kingdom to them but led them into it through their understanding of the Law. For example, in His dealings with Nicodemus, Jesus showed him that he should have been aware of the spiritual birth given the fact that he was a teacher in Israel. As a teacher, Nicodemus should have recognized the spiritual aspect of the Law as well as the physical. That he didn't, and was in fact confused, showed that he, as a disciple of some other teacher, had not been made fully aware of God's Law.

By the grace of God, we can turn this around if we would only give the Holy Spirit His rightful place. His job is to convict. *Conversion* without *conviction* of sin leads to a lack of *consistency* in the Christian Walk! Conviction of sin comes when we are informed that we have not measured up. *That* information is given to us through the Holy Spirit's revelation of our sin in light of God's Law.

I hope that you will agree that there is a need within the Evangelical Church to re-emphasize the role of the Law in its evangelistic efforts. We must realize that “no-Law” too often leads to no

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<sup>23</sup> Finney, Charles G.; *Ibid.*; Pgs.2,3.

real sense of sin, either in the totality of sin's depravity, or in the sinner's sense of impending judgment. These realizations were underscored in part by the statistics of perseverance in this century versus last century. In the last century, 20% of all converts backslid; today, 80% or more, backslide. According to George Barna the average person who accepts Christ lasts only eight weeks in a church.

This is the precise point of our error! We have failed, in our headlong rush to harvest souls and make disciples, to realize the need for the sinner *to be prepared* to receive grace. Rather, we have offered it freely, and in so doing, misunderstood and misrepresented the *free* aspect of this marvelous gift. By "skipping over" the Law and not allowing the Holy Spirit to use it to bring the sinner to true repentance, we have cheapened God's grace. Grace and faith flourish best in properly prepared hearts. That was one of the points in Jesus' discourse about the Sower; three of the four soils were not adequately prepared to receive the seed; and, as a result, much of the Sower's effort was in vain. That truth has come to haunt the Church of this age. What are we going to do? We should do as John Wesley stated to a young preacher, "Preach 90% Law and 10% Grace."<sup>24</sup>

Now, while we are not going to pursue an actual percentage of Law and Grace, we are going to return to the object of our omission and seek God's wisdom concerning His Law. The Apostle Paul stated that the Law was good. Lord willing, we too will come to that conclusion and recognize that any adverse reaction we may experience towards that Law is the result of our own flesh (see Romans 7:14).

When we speak of the Law of God, we will confine ourselves in this study to speaking specifically of the Revelation of God's will in the Ten Commandments. Also, for the purpose of this study, we will use the *common* numbering system. For further information on this, see Appendix "A". Given the fact that God has stated that there is no one who is righteous (Romans 3:10), and that we are all sinners who have broken His Law (Romans 3:23), the following statistic from the Barna Report of 1992-1993 is of special interest: "Six percent of all Americans claim they completely follow each of the Ten Commandments."

Are you included in that six percent? Do you know anyone who is? We are all guilty of breaking God's Laws; yet, we have a responsibility to obey those Laws, not because they will make us righteous, but because they will lead us to the One who can, Jesus. The Ten Commandments should be an integral part of every Christian's life. When I first read the above "statistic, I thought, "I'd sure like to meet some of those six percent." Then, upon further reflection, I concluded that the percentage should be a lot higher. The reason it's not a greater percentage is because we have been fooled into thinking that we no longer have responsibility to the Law of God; and, consequently, we have little familiarity with those Laws.

If you are not familiar with the Ten Commandments, they are conveniently listed for us in Exodus 20:3-17. If you missed the first showing, they are listed again in Deuteronomy 5:7-22. We will turn our attention to the first passage.

The first three Commandments have to do with our relationship with God. The last seven have to do, either with us personally, or with our interpersonal relationships.

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<sup>24</sup> Comfort, Ray; Ibid.