

The Law: gift, accusation, and the shape of our humanity

- General observations:
 - When I say “law,” what first comes to mind? Images, experiences, feelings?
 - Law as rooted in God’s nature and given to all: love for the whole cosmos, and the cosmos as built for love.
 - “God has arranged all creatures so that they serve one another. The sun serves the earth; the earth serves us; and all creatures are given for the benefit of (humanity).”¹
 - “The sun, the moon, and the stars serve us; the fields produce grain and fruit; the animals give milk, wool, and labor. Thus everything in creation is ordered for the service of others.”²
 - “Therefore it is natural to honor God, not steal, not commit adultery, not bear false witness, not murder; and what Moses commands is nothing new. For what God has given the Jews from heaven, he has also written in the hearts of all men.”³
 - Fear and love
 - Prohibition and permission
 - Not abstract speculation
- 1st Commandment
 - Def. of a god
 - “A ‘god’ is the term for that to which we are to look for all in and which we are to find refuge in all need. Therefore, to have a god is nothing else to trust and believe in that one with your whole heart. . . (i)f your faith and trust are right, then your God is the true one . . . (f)or these two belong together, faith and God. Anything on which your heart relies and depends, I say, that is really your God.”⁴
 - The relationships between faith, idolatry, and the true God.
 - To what do our hearts cling? How do we know? Self-examination and spiritual discipline.
- 2nd and 3rd Commandments—Or, how best to hang a heart
 - Vertical relationship
 - Honoring God’s name
 - “God’s name cannot be abused more flagrantly than when it is used to lie or deceive.”⁵

¹ Martin Luther, *Lectures on Genesis*, LW 1: 69-70

² Martin Luther, *Lectures on Genesis*, LW 5: 32-33.

³ Martin Luther, *How Christians Should Regard Moses* (1525), LW 35:164–165.

⁴ Martin Luther, “Large Catechism,” in *The Book of Concord: The Confessions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church*. Edited by Robert Kolb and Timothy J. Wengert. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2000, p. 386.

⁵ Martin Luther, “Large Catechism,” p. 399.

