

# The Law Commands and Makes Us Know Worksheet

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## *Verse 1*

The Law commands and makes us know  
What duties to our God we owe;  
But 'tis the Gospel must reveal  
Where lies our strength to do His will.

## *Verse 2*

The Law discovers guilt and sin  
And shows how vile our hearts have been;  
The Gospel only can express  
Forgiving love and cleansing grace.

## *Verse 3*

What curses doth the Law denounce  
Against the man that fails but once!  
But in the Gospel Christ appears,  
Pard'ning the guilt of numerous years.

## *Verse 4*

My soul, no more attempt to draw  
Thy life and comfort from the Law.  
Fly to the hope the Gospel gives;  
The man that trusts the promise lives.

**Vocabulary** In one or two words define the following terms from the poem.

*Verse 1:* commands, duties, owe, 'tis, reveal

*Verse 2:* guilt, sin, vile, Gospel, express, cleansing, grace

*Verse 3:* curses, doth, denounce, Pard'ning, numerous

*Verse 4:* attempt, trusts

**Word Pictures** Word pictures is another way of saying *imagery*. *Imagery* or *figurative language* helps us form a picture of what the author is trying to present. Discuss what these word pictures mean and, without making an image of God, draw your idea of the *imagery* or *figurative language* the author uses!

*Verse 1:* Law commands, duties ... we owe

*Verse 2:* Law discovers guilt and sin; vile ... hearts; cleansing grace

*Verse 3:* curses ... the Law denounce; Pard'ning ... guilt

*Verse 4:* Fly to the hope

**Mechanics** are the nuts and bolts of a poem. Verbally discuss.

***Who is the speaker?*** (Does the speaker have a specific personality or has the author remained in the background so the message of the poem will be more clear?)

***What does the poem reveal about the speaker's character?*** (Sometimes, poems reveal nothing about the speaker's personal thoughts, feelings, or attitudes. Yet, the poem may demonstrate those character traits that are important to the author like courage, loyalty, perseverance, etc.)

***Is the speaker addressing someone in particular or is it to anyone?*** (Sometimes poems are not directed to anyone in particular, but to anyone that may read it.)

***Does the poem have a setting?*** (Does the author tell where the poem occurs? Is the poem about a specific event?)

***Is the poem about a particular event?*** (Is the event past or present? If it is about a past event, does the remembrance of the event have a particular meaning to the speaker?)

***Is the theme of the poem stated directly or indirectly?*** (Some poems are straightforward and are meant to be taken literally. In songs, the theme may be presented in the refrain or in the last few lines. Sometimes the theme is a little bit more difficult to discern as it is made with figurative language or symbols.)

***What point of view or perspective is the speaker?*** (What meaning do you think the poem has for the author?)

***How did you respond to the poem when you read it the first time?*** (Did your thoughts and feelings change after you took time to study it?)

### **Comprehension Questions** Verbally discuss

*Verse 1:* Who or what teaches the believer his or her duty? How does the Gospel help the Christian in doing his/her duty?

*Verse 2:* What does the Law discover? Why would this be important to the believer? What does the Gospel express? Why is this important?

*Verse 3:* What does the Law denounce? Why is this important? Who or what appears in the Gospel? What does this Person do?

*Verse 4:* What does the Gospel provide for the author? Explain and discuss: “The man that trusts the promise lives.”

Did the message become more real to you after reading this poem? Why? It has been said, “Since Christ wrote the Law, it is a means to being grateful for His grace.” Discuss.

After reading this poem, what character traits did you think of? What does the Bible have to say about these character traits?

### **What Does the Bible Say?**

Find Scripture proofs for each of the assertions or statements made for each of the four verses.

Discuss how Joseph, Daniel, Mordecai and Nehemiah in the older testament applied God’s Law-Word to their civic responsibilities. How did the early Church respond to their civic responsibilities?

### **The Author/Poet**

Based on what you have studied about this poem so far, would you guess that the author was a Christian or a humanist? How did you arrive at your decision?

The name of the author for this poem or lyric is Isaac Watts (1674-1748). He was born 17 July 1674, in Southampton, England, and died 25 November 1748, in Stoke Newington, England. He is buried at Bunhill

Fields Cemetery, London, England. Watt's had an interesting father who was imprisoned two times for his religious views. Mr. Watts studied Greek and Latin but declined an offer for a standard university education preferring to attend the Nonconformist Academy at Stoke Newington in 1690. When Mr. Watts was 20-22 he stayed at home and wrote the majority of the hymns for *Hymns and Spiritual Songs* that were published in 1707-1709. For six years he was the tutor Mr. John Hartopp's son. Mr. Watts was ordained in 1702.

"Give 'em Watts, boys, give 'em Watts!"

Interestingly, Isaac Watts is intimately connected with the American War of Independence. In an attack upon Springfield when the patriots' wadding gave out, Rev. James Caldwell (of Huguenot descent) ran into a Presbyterian church returning with his arms and pockets crammed full with *Watts' Psalms and Hymns* saying, "Now, boys, give them Watts!" The British offered large rewards for the capture of Rev. Caldwell, but to no avail. Therefore, the British burned his church, shot his wife while she was in the midst of their nine children, dragged her body into the street, and burned his home and out buildings.

### **Geography**

Locate Southampton, England, and London on a globe, map and atlas.

*Challenge* Locate Stoke Newington (England) on a map or in an atlas.

Compare/contrast England's weather with your own for one week.

Make an English meal for your family.

Make a meal for your family.

### **Activities**

1) Make your own book! Without making an image of Christ, draw pictures representing each verse. (Note: that will be four different illustrations). With construction paper and other items readily available at home, make a title page with the name of the song and the author's name which will be your book's cover. You may want to illustrate your cover and include this poem in your book.

2) Make your own play! Re-enact with your siblings or friends the message discussed in this poem. Keep it lively, simple, and short. You may want to end your play with singing a rousing chorus of this poem or reading Scripture verses. Videotape your creation.

3) Radio Drama! With a handheld tape recorder, create your own radio show dramatizing the message of this poem.

4) Be a Reporter! Either with your family camcorder or with a handheld tape recorder, "interview" various individuals connected with this poem (e.g., Peter, Joshua in the older testament, Patrick Henry, famous Christian entertainers like Eleanor Powell, etc.). In order to have the fast paced style of a reporter, watch and/or listen to the news with your parents' permission. Keep the interviews lively, quick, and to the point.

Remain objective! Being objective means just reporting the facts and not giving your opinion of the situation.

5) What is one of the things you most enjoy? Is it literature? math? science? sports? cooking? Take that area of interest and relate that to this poem. If you enjoy dance, for example, develop a dance routine that physically

expresses the sentiments of this poem. If you enjoy shop, create something out of wood that helps to clarify this poem. Do you enjoy creating stories? Write a story based on any time period you desire that expresses the sentiments of this poem. Do you enjoy creating things in the kitchen? Make an ancient meal from this time or develop your own meal that symbolizes the many different points this poem makes.

6) Poster. Create a poster illustrating the the author's view of the impact of *The Law Commands and Makes Us Know*.

7) Scavenger Hunt. Go to the library to learn what you can about Isaac Watts (1674-1748) and share it with your family. If possible, discover the story behind this poem.