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Law and Grace.

(2019)

Bible House of Grace contains an easy to read New and Old Testament commentary full of spiritual treasures and pearls, complete with an insightful resource guide illuminating God's love and grace.



Learn the Bible at Home

Although I believe my aim is pure and God's will perfect this document is still the product of a human man, as to such I neither claim perfect knowledge or perfect understanding.

Law and Grace.

Topics.

- The law was our guardian until Christ came.
- You shall not covet.
- The righteousness of God has been manifested apart from the law.
- You are all one in Christ Jesus.
- The righteous shall live by faith.
- Christ is the end of the law for righteousness.

THE LAW WAS OUR GUARDIAN UNTIL CHRIST CAME

- **Galatians 3:24:** So then, the law was our guardian until Christ came, in order that we might be justified by faith.

The law is on the one hand, holy and right and good it embodies the instruction of God and His will for all mankind, while on the other hand the law brings sin into the light and exposes even those hidden sins that lie within the heart and mind. Paul said:

- He would not have known what it is to covet if the law had not said, you shall not covet. But sin finding opportunity in the commandment, wrought in him all manner of covetousness (Rom. 7:7).

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The law is splendid as a guide to an understanding of God's will, but as a means of reunion with God, the God we have sinned against, it is a hopeless failure, but God always knew it would be, not because of a fault in the law, but because a flaw in us. The law does not have mercy or compassion its demand on those that are under it is strictly official, formal and legal and enforced without compassion or any sense of sorrow toward its condemned victims. The universal demand of the law states; "For the wages of sin is death" (Rom. 6:23) meaning if anyone fails to keep the law in any aspect, they are guilty of breaking the law it then without mercy rightfully and legally judges and sentences its guilty victims (all mankind) to death. All who think that they can attain by self-effort to the perfect demands of the law should know that it is futile to attempt to attain to righteousness by keeping the law for the following two reasons:

1. The law states: "You shall not covet your neighbour's house; you shall not covet your neighbour's wife, or his male servant, or his female servant, or his ox, or his donkey, or anything that is your neighbour's" (Exod. 20:17).
2. Jesus not only commanded us to love our neighbour as ourselves (Matt. 19:17-20) (Matt. 22:37-40) (Mark 12:29-31), but also said all the commandments regarding mankind are summed up these words. James calls Jesus command to love our neighbour as ourselves the royal law (James 2:8). This is because the spirit underpinning this law is love since each law protects the innocent from harm and the spirit underpinning the royal law love your neighbour as yourself is desiring the best for others contrasted to the spirit underlying coveting which is seeking the best for self.

THE MEANING OF COVET

COVET: (covetousness) means to set the heart upon, to desire, long for or lust after (rightfully or otherwise) it carries the idea of holding onto or desiring more than one has or needs (the practice of greediness) and embraces those who live a lifestyle of unlawful sex, orgies adulteries and sexual immorality to fulfil their own lust and to anyone whose heart is craving after and worshipping and exalting another person as a god (an Idolater).

By implication covet: can refer to those who are not honest and true and who use pressure or coercion to force or entice others to fulfil their own selfish need or ambition and to anyone who intentionally deprives somebody of money or property by dishonest means because they are greedy and eager for gain. The commandment, "You shall not covet" exposes human selfishness, pride, ego, lust, and greed etc. It reveals the dysfunctions and aberrations that are imbedded within our fallen corrupted human nature that hinder us from attaining to the perfection of God's Holy law. It exposes our self-centeredness in our desires for more than we need, our excessive avariciousness toward materialism, our overeating of tasty foods the craving to be important or esteemed, our sensual and lustful thoughts, the desire to be rich and have abundantly more than we need etc.

The commandments, "You shall not covet" and "Love your neighbour as yourself," shines a spotlight on our self-interest, they highlight our lack of willingness to give to those less fortunate and those in need, they expose our degrading, resentful, bitter and jealous thoughts of others and the list goes on. In summary the command, "You shall not covet" embraces all those attitudes and thoughts that dwell within our members that are contrary to the law of love and the Holiness of God which means the entire human race is held guilty before the law and therefore it legally has the right and the power to condemn us all to death which it does without hesitation, compassion or mercy the law shows no mercy or compassion its demand on those that are under it is strictly official, formal and legal and enforced without compassion or any sense of sorrow toward its condemned victims.

The universal demand of the law states; "For the wages of sin is death" (Rom. 6:23) meaning if anyone fails to keep the law in any aspect, they are guilty of breaking the law. It then without mercy rightfully and legally judges and sentences its guilty victims (all mankind) to death. The law is splendid as a guide to an understanding of God's will, but as a means of reunion with God, the God we have sinned against, it is a hopeless failure, but God always knew it would be, not because of a fault in the law but because a flaw in us, but, the wonder and the glory of the Good News of the Gospel states:

- God through Christ has cancelled the record of debt that stood against us with its legal demands (the debt being all our trespasses and sins) (Col. 2:13-14).

Paul tells us that:

- The righteousness of God has been manifested apart from the law, although the law and the prophets bear witness to it (Rom. 3:21).

This means that the righteousness of God has been manifested in Christ, without the law because Christ perfectly manifested the law by love, he did not need rules, regulations and laws, because he always responded in love (i.e., kindness, compassion, mercy, grace and forgiveness etc.). When every action flow from these attitudes of love a person is automatically fulfilling the law. This is because the spirit behind the law is love and protecting the innocent from harm and hurt. When people live from love, they will naturally help others and certainly not deliberately hurt or harm another that is why they do not need the law. They do not need to be taught what is right and wrong because from love flows, compassion, kindness, mercy, grace and forgiveness and in actions and behaviour flowing from love there is no wrong so there is no need for the law.

In the letter to the Galatians Paul wrote:

- The law which came four-hundred and thirty years afterward, does not annul a covenant previously ratified by God, so as to make the promise void (Gal. 3:17), but the Scripture (concerning the law) imprisoned everything under sin, so that the promise by faith in Jesus Christ might be given to those who believe (Gal. 3:22).

The promise is that God will grant righteous that leads to eternal life as a free and pure gift to those who acknowledge God and have faith in Christ. Paul in these verses is highlighting the truth that the promise is given to those who believe and shining a spotlight on the reality that God's promise takes priority over the giving of the law by stating that the law cannot invalidate the promise that God made four-hundred and thirty years earlier, because the promise was given to those who believe. This means that it is by claiming the promise, not by law keeping, that a Gentiles are incorporated into the family of Abraham the father of all who believe. It is exactly the same for all Jews they cannot rely on the fact that they are natural descendants of their Hebrew fathers. To attain to eternal life everyone (Jew and Gentile) must go through the Lord Jesus Christ.

Paul in the following verses shines and even brighter light on this truth:

- There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus (Gal. 3:28), because Christ has redeemed us from the curse of the law (Gal. 3:13).

The curse of the law is the guilt and condemnation that it pronounces on all who do not keep it perfectly and its sentence of death, everyone should be fully aware that law keeping cannot make any person right before God for the following two reasons.

1. Nobody can possibly keep the law perfectly, for a month, let alone all their life.
2. A person cannot do good works tomorrow to make up for their failures today. No judge is going to set a man who has murdered one person free even if he promises to save one hundred people in the future, saving one-hundred people today does not make up for killing one human in the past.

Should we ever begin to think we have not broken the law because we have not murdered, committed adultery, raped, or stolen etc., all we have to do is read the following words of John "If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us and if we say we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us (1 John 1:8-10) and measure ourselves against the law thou shalt not covet, the royal law love your neighbour as yourself and against Jesus famous Sermon on the Mount (see Matthew five, in Commentary NT (ON WEBSITE MENU)).

In Paul's letter to the Romans he wrote:

- Now we know that whatever the law says it speaks to those who are under the law, so that every mouth may be stopped, and the whole world may be held accountable to God. ²⁰For by works of the law no human being will be justified in his sight, since through the law comes knowledge of sin (Rom. 3:19–20).

And to the Galatians he said:

- 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. 3:10).

Ponder the following thought: if it was possible for us to keep the law a personal relationship with God would be insufferable because striving to keep the law to be justified would put a person's life under constant stress and anxiety for the following reasons, on the days a person kept the law

they would comfortably approach God, but on the days they failed to keep the law they would be unable to approach him. Added to this dilemma, if a person was able to keep the law, they would tend to become very self-righteous. Those that were better able to keep the law would tend to be very judgmental to those who had difficulty, worse still if a person died on a day, they failed to keep the law they would be condemned to eternal death.

THE RIGHTEOUS SHALL LIVE BY FAITH

- **Galatians 3:11:** Now it is evident that no one is justified before God by the law, for "The righteous shall live by faith."

The righteous in this context refers to those who trust in the Gospel of God and the message of the apostles and the Lord Jesus Christ which loudly and clearly proclaims a repentant sinner is saved by faith it is a free gift of God, no-one can boast because they have done nothing to earn it. The righteous shall live by faith means:

- Living in a devoted, loving and trusting relationship with God in contrast to a cold legalistic totting up of religious merit points in the heavenly ledger to be saved.
- Trusting in God's love and God's grace.
- Believing and trusting that we are saved by Christ's righteousness and not our own.
- Not trusting in self-effort or adhering to ceremonial rites, holy days or keeping religious customs and traditions etc., to save us.
- Believing God counts us righteous and that we are saved to eternal life despite the sinful aberrations and dysfunctions that dwell within the fallen and corrupted body we live in.

It should always be remembered that Christ did not die so that we could attain to the Holy standard of God, but because we couldn't, if anyone of us could attain to the perfection the law demands and live free of sin Christ died for no purpose. Some feel Christians need to complete their salvation by keeping the law because Paul had Timothy circumcised, (Acts 16:3) they reason if Paul's and Timothy's salvation is complete in Christ why would Paul have a Christian man circumcised to meet the requirements of the law? Especially since Paul not only knew the grace of God and called himself the greatest of all sinners, but also proclaimed that salvation was by faith and grace alone, yet he has Timothy circumcised which on the surface seems to contradict all that Paul proclaims, but circumcising Timothy had nothing to do with salvation.

Paul obviously refuses acts of the law if they are made criteria of salvation, but he is prepared to make use of them in the interests of Christian charity where there is no question of their being regarded as essential for salvation. Paul and Timothy were about to enter a Jewish Synagogue, these Jews were still under the law so rather than offend them, Paul has Timothy circumcised as an act of curtesy to their custom and law and for the greater purpose of being able to testify and witness the Lord Jesus Christ within the unbelieving Jews own Synagogues.

How amazing was Timothy faith and love for the lost to even go through with it, I wonder how many Christian men (myself included) today would be prepared to accept such a challenge so as to reach those who do not know the Lord. Paul's attitude toward things offered to idols, as set out in (Romans 14:1) and (1 Corinthians chapter 8 & 10) enshrines this same principle. Paul told certain Christian men to purify themselves and shave their heads so that the Jews under the law would accept them because they observed the religious customs of their law (Acts 21:24). Paul kept

customs, traditions and the ceremonial law as an act of charity or respect for a person's tradition and especially if it gave him greater opportunity to witness Christ, but the following verse clearly shows that Paul himself was not bound by them.

- To the Jews I (Paul) became as a Jew, in order to win Jews. To those under the law I became as one under the law (though not being myself under the law) that I might win those under the law (1 Cor. 9:20).

Paul became all things to all men means he did what was tactful and decent so as not to offend anyone, even though they were not absolute laws or rules that applied to him. Even when Paul was not bound by a custom or tradition, he respected those that were. Paul's motivation was always to gain favour by people so he could share the Gospel. Paul understood that if you offend people, they will not be open to listening to what you have to say about the Bible. The following words of Paul to the Christian brothers and sisters in Rome clearly show that he was not only spiritually dead to the things of the world, but also spiritually dead to the law in regards to earning righteousness that leads to eternal salvation.

Paul wrote:

- Likewise, brothers, you also have died to the law through the body of Christ, so that you may belong to another, to him who has been raised from the dead, in order that we may bear fruit for God (Rom. 7:4).

Paul (and those he is writing to), have a new and spiritual covenant, one that is in his heart and mind; he is in a personal relationship with God through his faith in Christ, which no legal written law exterior to him could possibly replace. The Old Testament external covenant of the law has been internalized in his heart by love (2 Cor. 3). Even though Paul was not bound by the law for salvation he said to the Corinthian believers that to those outside the law (referring to Gentiles) he became as one outside the law (not being outside the law of God but under the law of Christ) that he might win those outside the law (1 Cor. 9:21).

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The words, "I became as one outside the law" does not mean Paul became a sinner, the law in this context is the Jewish ceremonial law those outside the law refers to the Gentiles it embraces everyone who is not a Jew, because they were not under the Jewish law. Paul saw Christ as the goal of the law for all believers, because Jesus was love personified. Jesus perfectly fulfilled the entire law of love. The Spirit behind the Ten Commandments is love because each law protects another human from physical, financial, sexual, verbal, emotional and spiritual harm; they are all summed up in Jesus command, "love your neighbour as yourself," because Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to everyone who believes (Rom. 10:4)

CHRIST IS THE END OF THE LAW FOR RIGHTEOUSNESS

Paul was now free to fulfill the law of Christ, and love his neighbour as himself he was liberated through the death of Christ from the religious system, and the curse imposed by failure to live up to it, because the whole law (the Ten Commandments) is fulfilled in words: "You shall love your neighbour as yourself" (Gal. 5:14). Loving your neighbour as yourself fulfils the entire Old Testament law regarding humans, because love does no harm that is why it is called the royal law in the New Testament. The next most important thing to God's heart after acknowledging He exists and loving the Lord Jesus Christ is helping and doing-good to others. These are the things that not only delight the heart of God and fulfil the Ten Commandments and law of Christ, but also fulfil God's universal law of love.

Paul summed this truth up with the following words:

- Bear one another's burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ (Gal. 6:2).

As the founder of Bible House of Grace, I would like to thank the many Christian scholars, commentators and theologians who have gone before me, and the many today, who have freely made available their works to enhance the knowledge of the Bible to all people worldwide. It is only with the help of these faithful writers that much of Bible House of Grace exists as it does today.

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