

## Introduction

We have said a lot about sanctification: we talked about the importance of doctrine, morals, and biblical love. We have explored the relationship between what we're supposed to do (imperatives) and what God has done (indicatives) and how all that relates to our experience. We also looked at how to appropriate our new identity (know, consider, present) and last week we dealt with our sin nature.

There is still something missing. A huge area that we have overlooked - the LAW - God's commands. What about the 10 commandments, the rules? This is what most people associate with Christianity. How are Christians supposed to relate to the law? This is a complex area. Why for instance aren't we trimming our clothing with tassels and building fences around our roofs to keep people from falling off? (Deut. 22:8;11,12) Why do we obey some laws in the Bible but not others? Tonight we will look closely at what the Bible says about the law and how we should relate to it.

How do Christians relate to the law? (Romans 7:1-6) 7:6\* But now we have been released from the Law, having died to that by which we were bound, so that we serve in newness of the Spirit and not in oldness of the letter.

Wrong way: "oldness of the letter"

You've died to it (Rom. 7:1-5)

It does not work (7:7-25)

The right way: "newness of the Spirit" (7:8)

Two things should be clear from this passage:

- We no longer have the same relationship with the Law that we had before we came to Christ. Paul says we have "died to," "been released from" the Law. This is actually another feature of our new identity.
- This is also a key to gaining freedom from sin and living effectively for God. Note the parallelism between this passage (especially 7:4,6; 6:14) and ROM 6:6. In both cases, we have died to them, with the result that a new and better quality of life with God is now available to us.

What is God's purpose for the Law? What does it mean to be "under the Law?" In what sense is the Christian "no longer under law?" Does the Law play any role in the Christian life whatever? This is an area of great confusion for Christians, because while the flesh is totally corrupt, the law is more complicated.

God's Law itself is good, and we need to understand its proper role in our lives (ROM 7: 7 What shall we say then? Is the Law sin? May it never be!). However, *relating to* the Law improperly (what Paul calls living "under the Law") is always destructive and is in fact a way of living according to our sinful natures. Therefore, the first half of tonight's class will focus on God's intended purpose for the Law, while the second half will focus on living under the Law.

### Three Components of the Mosaic Law

To properly understand the role of the Law in our sanctification, we need to first understand God's Law and it's purpose. God did not divide the Law into these three components: they were "braided" together ( read Lev. 19:23-34 for an example and note that all three components are present).

### Classification Of Mosaic Legislation

Component And Purpose	Examples	Present Status For Christians
<b>Civil:</b> Pragmatic aspects of civil order. To preserve the nation until Messiah came.	National laws: witchcraft & idolatry (considered treason in a theocracy), inheritance laws, penal laws (murder, theft, etc.), health laws (sanitary codes)	Jewish theocracy has been temporarily replaced by national governments during the Church Age (Matt. 22:21; ROM 13:1-7).

<p><b>Ceremonial:</b> Israel's prescribed pattern of rituals for approaching God. To prepare &amp; educate the nation for Messiah's saving work—specifically, the seriousness of sin &amp; substitutionary atonement. To give Israel a distinct culture and national identity.</p>	<p>Sacrificial system (blood sacrifices), religious calendar including sabbath, ritual system (ceremonial uncleanness), circumcision, some health and dietary laws.</p>	<p>Fulfilled by Christ's work on the cross (Heb. 8; Col. 2:16). Sacrifice for sins expressly forbidden (Heb. 10). Ritualism is now set aside for a personal relationship with God (Heb. 7:18,19; Gal. 4:1-11). Dietary &amp; calendar observance are no longer required (ROM 14:1-5). Note: There has been a great shift in the way we relate to the law in this area: <b>1)</b> 100's of rituals to 2 <b>2)</b> lots of detail on how to observe rituals to virtually no details <b>3)</b> foreshadowing role to commemorative role Jesus hinted at this change in Jn. 4:23,24.</p>
<p><b>Moral:</b> A description of God's character and ethical will for humanity. To give humanity an absolute morality. To expose their sinfulness &amp; their need for God's grace. To provide the basis for much of the Old Testament civil law (sexual laws, murder, theft, etc.).</p>	<p>Most of the Ten Commandments, including both behaviors (murder, theft, adultery) and internal attitudes (do not covet). The New Testament reiterates these laws.</p>	<p>Christ fulfills its requirements for God's acceptance (Gal. 2:16). The Holy Spirit fulfills it in our lives as we walk with him (ROM 8:4). The New Testament moral imperatives thus provide a picture of the transformation that God is willing and able to accomplish in our lives.</p>

Summary: Christians are not under the law in the following ways

- Civil: not obligated to conform our civil laws to the Old Testament's civil law.
- Ceremonial: not obligated to relate to God through Old Testament ritual observance.
- Moral: not obligated to earn God's acceptance by our good works
- Moral: not obligated to serve God by our own power.

Let's talk more about God's intended role for the moral law . . .

**The Tutorial Purpose of the Moral Law**

Gal. 3:24\* Therefore the Law has become our tutor to lead us to Christ, that we may be justified by faith.

The "tutorial use" of the Law is a term that stems from Gal. 3:24\*, in which Paul states that "the law has become our tutor to lead us to Christ . . ." The word "tutor" (paidagogos) refers to "child-conductors," or household slaves who were in charge of making their master's children go to school, do their chores, etc. Children under the authority of a task master longed to reach adulthood so they could be free from them.

Why do we need a tutor?

In the same way, Paul says that the main purpose of the law is to help us to see our need for the freedom of God's grace. It does this by revealing our moral weakness and depravity.

By default, we tend to operate in our flesh. We do what comes "naturally" to us - under our power, not God's. Approaching God under law is intuitive to our sinful nature, but the Bible says it's counterproductive. Approaching God under grace is counter intuitive, but productive.

Paul says the law acts as our tutor in two areas, Justification & Sanctification:

Function	Non-Christian Justification	Christian Sanctification
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	<p>Gal. 3:24 - The law is designed to teach the non-Christian that he cannot earn God's acceptance by his good works. It does this by:</p>	<p>Notice the same ways the law works in Paul's life as a Christian. The issue here is not getting God's acceptance (justification), but rather our transformation into the likeness of Christ (sanctification).          In ROM 7:6, Paul tells us we now have the option of serving "in the newness of the Spirit"—i.e., by the power of the Holy Spirit (which he explains in ROM 8:4-11). This should be the norm for Christians, and it is an important part of living under grace.          However, because we often default back to trying to serve God by our own power ("the oldness of the letter"), Paul goes on (in ROM 7:7-25) to describe living under the Law in this sense, and how the Law itself teaches us the futility of this way of service.</p>
<p><b>Exposes Sin</b></p>	<p><b>(ROM 3:19,20) Now we know that whatever the Law says, it speaks to those who are under the Law, that every mouth may be closed, and all the world may become accountable to God; because by the works of the Law no flesh will be justified in His sight; for through the Law comes the knowledge of sin.</b>          Like an X-RAY which diagnosis problems, the law reveals how internally demanding God's standard is, and therefore how far short we fall (JUMPING TO CATALINA ISLAND). This is what Paul calls "using the law lawfully" (1 Tim. 1:6-11). Notice how Jesus used the law this way with self-righteous Jews (Matt. 5:17-48; Mk. 10:17-22). See also Jas. 2:10; ROM 2:14-16.</p>	<p><b>(ROM 7:7) What shall we say then? Is the Law sin? May it never be! On the contrary, I would not have come to know sin except through the Law; for I would not have known about coveting if the Law had not said, "YOU SHALL NOT COVET."</b>          Here, the attitude of "coveting" is emphasized. This is an internal attitude, not just an outward action (UNLOVING; SELFISH MOTIVES FOR GOOD ACTIONS). We welcome God's deepening exposure of our sin through his moral imperatives—this is normal for all growing Christians (OSWALD SANDERS asking the Lord through GAL. 5—"Am I more patient, kind, etc.?" His goal was increased awareness of character needs that God might be prioritizing).          The problem is that Paul responded to this awareness the wrong way. Instead of allowing this realization to deepen his dependence on God's power to change him, he opts for moral self-improvement. Note Paul's use of the first person and his lack of dependence on God's power to overcome the power of sin.</p>
<p><b>Stimulates Sin</b></p>	<p><b>(ROM 5:20) And the Law came in that the transgression might increase; but where sin increased, grace abounded all the more... (ROM 7:5) For while we were in the flesh, the sinful passions, which were aroused by the Law, were at work in the</b></p>	<p><b>(ROM 7:8) But sin, taking opportunity through the commandment, produced in me coveting of every kind; for apart from the Law sin is dead.</b>          As Paul struggles to keep the law by his own power, he finds himself breaking it more and more. Note how frequently Paul refers to himself ("I;" "me") and note the absence of reference to the Holy Spirit (as in chapter 8).</p>

	<p><b>members of our body to bear fruit for death.</b>  The law "increases sin" by stimulating our sin-nature into action ("DON'T WALK ON THE GRASS;" "NO FISHING"). It exposes our rebellious pride. Not only do we fall objectively short of God's standard, but we also realize that we are incapable of reforming ourselves.</p>	
<p><b>Therefore it Destroys Self-Confidence &amp; Leads Us To Faith In Christ.</b>  The law exposes our impotence to change on our own power.</p>	<p><b>(Gal. 3:24*) Therefore the Law has become our tutor to lead us to Christ, that we may be justified by faith.</b>  Because of the above, we despair of earning God's acceptance by our good works and instead look outside of ourselves to Christ for his free gift of righteousness (PUBLICAN in Lk. 18).</p>	<p><b>(ROM 7:9-24) And I was once alive apart from the Law; but when the commandment came, sin became alive and I died; and this commandment, which was to result in life, proved to result in death for me . . . For that which I am doing, I do not understand; for I am not practicing what I would like to do, but I am doing the very thing I hate . . . For I know that nothing good dwells in me, that is, in my flesh; for the wishing is present in me, but the doing of the good is not. For the good that I wish, I do not do; but I practice the very evil that I do not wish . . . Wretched man that I am! Who will set me free from the body of this death? Thanks be to God through Jesus Christ our Lord!</b>  It is important to note that Paul here begins using the terms "die" and "live" differently than he does in 6:1-7:6. In that section, he uses these terms in the <i>positional</i> (identity) sense. But 7:9-8:13, he uses these terms in the conditional sense as synonyms for spiritual defeat and spiritual victory in the Christian life (see also 8:6,11,13; 2 Cor. 4:16). Note the context to determine whether he is referring to our position (new identity), as in Romans 5:15; 6:2-11, and 7:4, or our condition (our present struggle with the sinful nature) as in Romans 6:16,23;7:5,9-11;8:2,6,13.</p> <p>The Law has led him to despair of being able to do God's will on his own power. He realizes that while his new nature wants to obey God (vs 18a), his sin-nature is too wily and powerful for him on his own (Vs 18bff.). So he finally realizes he must look outside himself to Christ for the power to deliver him from the power of his flesh (Vs 25a &gt;&gt; NEE'S "DROWNING MAN" Watchman Nee, <i>The Normal Christian Life</i>. p. 168). Vs 25b: Christ is the One who does this by:  8:1 - no longer condemning us for our sins (JUSTIFICATION)  8:2,4 - giving us the power through the Holy Spirit to substantially do God's will in this life</p>

		(SANCTIFICATION) 8:23 - delivering us completely when he returns and gives us our new bodies (GLORIFICATION) >> ANTI-PERFECTIONISM
<b>Result: We are no longer under law for...</b>	<p><b>... for justification (Gal. 3:25) But now that faith has come, we are no longer under a tutor.</b> We are no longer under the tutor!!! Never again should we worry about earning or keeping God's acceptance by our works, because Christ's finished work has forever secured it for us. Many Christians who understand that they are no longer under law in the sense of justification, do not understand what it means to be no longer under law with regard to sanctification. This is what Romans 7:7-25 is all about.</p>	<p><b>... for sanctification (ROM 6:14*) For sin shall not be master over you, for you are not under law, but under grace. (ROM 7:6*) But now we have been released from the Law, having died to that by which we were bound, so that we serve in newness of the Spirit and not in oldness of the letter.</b> We no longer need to nor choose to serve God by our own power. <b>(ROM 6:14*)</b> For sin shall not be master over you, for you are not under law, but under grace. "Under law" here is connected to sin's mastery over us (a sanctification issue) rather than God's acceptance of us (justification). Paul is anticipating his argument in ROM 7,8. If we try to follow God by our own power ("under law"), sin will continue its mastery over us (ROM 7). But if we follow God by relying on his power ("under grace"), we will be gradually liberated from sin's power. <b>(ROM 7:6*)</b> But now we have been released from the Law, having died to that by which we were bound, so that we <i>serve</i> in newness of the Spirit and not in oldness of the letter. Serving "in the oldness of the letter" is what Paul describes in 7:7-25. Serving "in the newness of the Spirit" is what he describes in 8:1-14.</p>

**Living Under Law vs. Under Grace**

What does it look like to live "under law" or "under grace?" Since Christians can still live "under law" even though we are now "under grace," we need to be able to recognize the symptoms of these two ways of living the Christian life.

Basically, "under law," I do it. It refers to approaching God's moral commandments *directly* (by our own resources), while "under grace" means "God does it for me." Under grace we approach God's moral commandments *indirectly* through the provision of Christ.

The following chart also explains more practically the difference between serving God "in the oldness of the letter" and serving him "in the newness of the Spirit." The chart comes from Dennis McCallum's book, [Walking in Victory](#).

Area	Under Law	Under Grace
<b>View of the Law</b>	A set of detailed obligations that I must keep.	The underlying principles of the law describe the ultimate goal toward which God is moving me: a loving lifestyle.
<b>View of self</b>	I am regenerate, and therefore I am able to keep the law.	I am regenerate (see <a href="#">New Identity</a> ), but I still can't keep the law on my own because of my sin-nature.

<b>View of others</b>	A threat to your feelings of acceptance if they are more righteous than you. An excuse for self-righteousness if they are less righteous than you.	Means of receiving God's love and opportunities to give God's love.
<b>View of the Holy Spirit</b>	Little practical understanding of the Spirit's ministries.	Depends on the Holy Spirit for all power, motivation, and direction.
<b>The "key" to spiritual growth.</b>	Moral willpower <i>or</i> Special experiences	Knows self-effort is futile (ROM 7:18). By relying on the Spirit, not the letter, I can gradually change. Looks to a process, not to quick-fix experiences.
<b>View of the "Means of Growth"</b>	Ways to keep or get God's blessing	Avenues through which we expose ourselves to the life-changing power of God
<b>Mental focus</b>	What do the rules require? What am I <i>not</i> allowed to do?	My new identity in Christ. My personal love-trust relationship with God. Loving others as a means of growth.
<b>Motivation</b>	Fear/threat and guilt. What will God or others do to me if I sin?	Grateful response to God's love and grace.
<b>Reaction to Trials</b>	View as God's punishment; suspicious of God's retribution.	Confident of God's loving discipline.
<b>Reaction to spiritual failure</b>	Surprised and distressed. Rationalizations, minimization, blame-shifting, and self-recrimination. Vows to do better.	Not surprised. Confident of God's acceptance & therefore can admit sins to self & others. Responds well to admonition. Repentance & return to active dependence.
<b>Reaction to spiritual success</b>	Proud and intolerant of others.	Humbly grateful. Still able to empathize with those who fail. Sees continued need for growth.
<b>Long-term result</b>	External, superficial conformity, but increasing internal defeat and hypocrisy which leads to: Growing cynicism & giving up <i>or</i> Self-righteous externalistic comparisons—self-deception	Gradual transformation into a person who remains focused on his identity in Christ, with an increasing measure of victory over sin. A more loving, other-centered person.

### **The Many "Faces" Of Legalism**

When we live the Christian life "under law," its practical outworking can take many "faces." We are using the term "legalism" to describe these different manifestations of living "under law." We should be aware of these forms of legalism both for our own spiritual health, and to help other Christians who are ensnared in them.

#### *Performance for acceptance by other people*

Even if we understand that God accepts us unconditionally and permanently, if we really value certain people's acceptance more than God's, we are living under the law.

- Examples

Anger when they don't respond "appropriately."

Unwillingness to serve unless they are present, or "accept" us; more motivated because they are present.

Unable to serve anonymously.

- Remedy

Focus on God's acceptance.

Drop our expectations of how we want other key people to respond to us.

Learn to ask rather than demand.

Think through beforehand how we will respond if others don't meet our expectations.

*Wrong view of God's moral will*

When we view God's moral will as antithetical to our ultimate fulfillment (GOD AS COSMIC KILLJOY), or as demands for our impersonal obedience out of a sense of duty only, we have believed Satan's lies and become profoundly legalistic.

- Examples

Complaining about following God.

Lack of enthusiasm and excitement.

Chronic inability to have victory over a sin-area.

- Remedy

Get into the Word and discover and choose to believe that God loves you!

Reflect on the passages that assure us that God's will is for our good (see ROM 12:2b; Jn. 10:10; Deut. 10:13).

Reflect on the fact that God's imperatives are invitations to experience more of God's goodness and faithfulness

*Defective ethical priorities*

Not all moral issues in the Bible are equally important. Jesus told the Pharisees they "strained out gnats but swallowed camels" when they emphasized tithing garden herbs but neglected mercy and justice and faithfulness (Matt. 23:23,24). The Holy Spirit does not treat us as impersonal machines upon which he mindlessly enforces God's morality. Instead, he works with each of us personally and starts with "first things first." Above all, he is out to transform us into people who love others sacrificially.

- Examples

Equating cigarette smoking with fornication for new Christians.

Morality without love (cold, selfish, person who never smokes or cusses). See ROM 13; Mt 22; Jas. 2; 1 Jn. 2:7-11; 1 Cor. 13 for passages that emphasize love as the main ethical priority.

- Remedy

Learn what ethics the Bible emphasizes (e.g., honesty; sobriety; sexual purity; loving others; etc.).

Pray for insight to cooperate with the Holy Spirit in his work in people's lives.

*Extra-biblical imperatives*

When we make moral rules or absolutes that are not in scripture, we have created a form of legalism. Over time, these rules tend to erode the authority of God's Word by obscuring it.

- Examples

Jewish Hand-Washings (Mark 7)

Drinking; Dancing; Movies

Cards; Some Forms Of Colorful Language

The justification for this is usually that these rules make it more difficult for us to sin (BRAZIL: GIRLS NOT ALLOWED TO WEAR SLEEVELESS BLOUSES; MEN NOT ALLOWED TO ATTEND SOCCER GAMES). But these rules don't necessarily protect us from sin—and they exact a cost in outreach by creating a Christian subculture that is needlessly different than the rest of society. Ultimately, we have to decide which is more important—that we make it as difficult as possible for us to sin, or that we make it as easy as possible for others to come to Christ!

- Remedy

Use the Word as a "scalpel" to pare away the man-made rules.

*Perfectionism*

We are not speaking of the doctrine of Christian perfectionism (that Christians can get to the point in this life where they no longer sin), but rather unrealistic moral expectations on one's self or others. In a fallen world, we will never have perfection in any area. As Francis Schaeffer said, "If we insist on perfection or nothing in any area in this fallen world, we will have nothing every time."

- Examples

Unwilling to try new things unless success is guaranteed.

Everything is "black and white" or "all or nothing" in relationships, ministry evaluation, etc..

Overriding sense of disappointment with whatever we are perfectionistic about; tend to live in the idealized past or future.

Unduly rigorous in confronting others.

- Remedy

Ask God to open our eyes to see how much imperfection he tolerates in us!

Ask God to see the "big picture" and general direction of people's lives rather than just focusing on what is still deficient.

Take steps of faith to try new things.

*"Resist" more than "replace" emphasis*

When we emphasize what God does not want us to do more than the satisfying life God makes available to us, this casts a negative, ascetic tone ("I can't" vs. "I get to") to our Christian lives that is uninviting and unmotivating. If we focus only or primarily on what we shouldn't do rather than on what we get to do, this makes sin more attractive. This would also be evident in how we view others' struggle with sin.

- Examples:

Lots of "Don't do" language and thinking.

Lack of loving output and other ministry.

- Remedy:

Emphasize the biblical positives: learning truth, loving others, etc. This is a real key to effective grace-based parenting, discipling, etc..

*Insufficient emphases on indicatives*

We may not have extra-biblical rules, but simply don't teach and model God's grace enough. The result is a harsh environment in which people tend to hide their sins for fear of rejection.

- Examples

Groups that have lots of admonition but little encouragement have this problem.

- Remedy

Be sure that your teachings and relationships have plenty of indicatives and encouragement.

If we understand grace and are aware of the various forms of legalism, no one can "put us under law." We can operate under grace no matter how legalistic others might be! (Anti-Victimology).

Keep in mind, Paul was rebuking the Galatians for choosing to be under law when responding to the Judaizers; he wasn't addressing the Judaizers for putting them under law, though he freely admits they are wrong for their approach.

Qualify: Young Christians may need some protection here until they get grounded.

## Memory Verses

**Gal. 3:24\*** - The purpose of the Law is to lead us to faith in Christ

**Rom. 7:6\*** - There are two ways to serve God for the Christian: "in the oldness of the letter" (self-effort) and "in the newness of the Spirit" (dependence on the Holy Spirit)

**Rom. 6:14\*** - Simply trying to keep God's law by our own power makes us slaves to sin

**Rom. 7:7-25\*\*** - A picture of Christian's struggle under the law