

THE LAW
OF
LOVE

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Crossroads Full Gospel
International Ministries

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Bracketed comments following some scriptures assist the reader in understanding the intended meaning of these verses

We acknowledge the additional works of the various Scholars and Bible Commentaries used in conjunction with the College material. This is not to say that we agree with all their theology, but we certainly value their contribution to the Body of Christ.

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THE LAW OF LOVE

Background Reading: Mark 12:28-33

In this current Church Age, also called “the Age of Grace,” the need for the ceremonial law and the offering of blood sacrifices has ceased. Indeed Jesus came once and for all to fulfill the law of sacrifice. This in turn allowed God’s grace, in full measure, to become available to all who call on the Name of the Lord and yield to the Holy Spirit.

ROMANS 3:20 *Therefore by the deeds (works) of the Law there shall no flesh be justified in His sight: for by the (Mosaic) Law is (only) the knowledge of sin.*

ROMANS 3:21 *But now the righteousness of God without (apart from) the (Mosaic) Law is manifested, being witnessed by the Law and the Prophets (the principle of justification by faith - Genesis 15:6; Habakkuk 2:4);*

ROMANS 3:22 *Even the righteousness of God (imputed righteousness) which is (comes) by faith of (in) Jesus Christ unto all and upon all them who believe (and trust in Him) . . .*

As we know, obedience to the commandments of God is not the means by which we are saved. Once we are regenerated, however, we are expected to conform to the righteous requirements of God’s Laws (commandments), not by law (through willpower) but by His power at work in us. This is because we now have, in Christ, a new Nature which can give us not only the desire as we yield to the Spirit, but also the power to do that which God wills in our lives. However we must yield willingly to the Holy Spirit so that the graces and energies of the Divine Nature can energize our hearts and minds - as we focus on God’s Word and will. And this focus is important in order to gain the necessary direction and then the necessary empowerment.

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Today, the ten commandments (Exodus 20:3-17), in letter and spirit, are fulfilled when Christians who are empowered by the Spirit obey the two commandments that Jesus referred to in the Gospels as being a condensed version of “*all the Law and the Prophets.*” These two commandments also sum up what is known as “the spirit of the Mosaic Law.”

**MATT 22:37 Jesus said unto him,
“You shall love the Lord your
God with all your heart,
and with all your soul, and
with all your mind.”**

**MATT 22:38 This is the first
and great commandment.**

**MATT 22:39 And the second is
like unto it, You shall love
your neighbour as yourself.**

**MATT 22:40 On these two
commandments hang all the
Law and the Prophets.”**

1. You shall have no other gods before Me.
2. You shall not make unto yourself any graven image
3. You shall not take the Name of the Lord in vain.
4. Remember the Sabbath Day, to keep it holy.
5. Honour your father and your mother.
6. You shall not kill.
7. You shall not commit adultery.
8. You shall not steal.
9. You shall not bear false witness against your neighbour.
10. You shall not covet . . .

Although the New Testament commandments are, for the most part, positive exhortations rather than warnings and prohibitions, the underlying principles are the same.

Rather than setting aside the moral law, the New Testament reinforces its commands, developing the truths contained within it more fully. In doing so, the New Testament focuses attention on the spirit of the Mosaic Law rather than the letter.

ROMANS 7:6 But now we are delivered from the Law (its demands), that being dead (because we died with Christ) wherein we were held (we were captive to the sin nature and to sin); that (now) we should serve in newness of Spirit (by His power overcoming sin), and not in the oldness of the letter (the Law of Moses or any set of rules in order to please God).

To “serve in newness of Spirit” is to be empowered by the Holy Spirit and living under the law of love; and to be under the law of love is to be under grace, for these are synonymous.

ROMANS 6:14 For sin (the sin nature) shall not have dominion over you: for you are not under the Law (as of old, and if we try to live under law, the sin nature will again gain dominion), but under grace (flowing to us as we yield and believe for His empowerment).

GALATIANS 5:14 For all the Law is fulfilled in one word, even in this; “You shall love your neighbour as yourself.” (Leviticus 19:18) (In this statement, the whole Law is fully obeyed - but only if we do so by His power not ours.)

“. . . Note that we who are in Christ have no legitimate reason to break God’s Laws (commandments) because Jesus has given us power to obey - to say “Yes” to His will, and in so doing, to say “No” to sin. . .

In simple terms, to break God's Laws is to come under the law of sin and death in those areas of disobedience, and therefore under the penalty of such. Note that we who are in Christ have no legitimate reason to break God's Laws (commandments) because Jesus has given us power to obey - to say "Yes" to His will, and in so doing, to say "No" to sin.

So to obey God's Laws from a willing heart will bring us under the law of love (or the Law of Life in Christ Jesus) in an experiential sense. Remember that we are placed legally under the law of love because of our position in Christ. We come under the law of love experientially, and so become eligible to receive God's blessings, when we allow ourselves to be led and empowered by the Holy Spirit.

We can conclude therefore that if we, as Christians, are no longer under the Mosaic Law of old (the law pertaining to righteousness in the Old Testament through the observance of the sacrificial offerings and the commandments), we are under the law of love. Then if we obey (yield to) the law of love, we fulfill the righteous requirements of all the Law of God, so pleasing Him. If we disobey (don't live in) the law of love, however, we come under the law of sin and death in that area, and so become eligible to suffer the designated penalty - for God in His righteousness cannot shield or protect us in these areas of disobedience.

“. . . We come under the law of love experientially, and so become eligible to receive God's blessings, when we allow ourselves to be led and empowered by the Holy Spirit. . . ”

Indeed sin, being anything that is against God's will in our life, will frustrate God's grace (Galatians 2:20-21) and prevent us from appropriating that which we need from Him on a day to day basis.

Christ came to enable us to stand in a position of righteousness, and in accepting Him as Lord and Saviour, we became righteous in

Him. From then on we need to serve God, and only by choosing to yield to the Holy Spirit and to be empowered to live in the law of love, can we do this.

THERE IS LIBERTY IN THE LAW OF LOVE

Because we are now under the law of love and have direct access to God and His empowerment, certain limitations in regard to receiving God's grace which were experienced by individuals in Old Testament times, do not apply today. Remember, as we have learned, that forgiveness and total cleansing are available today in a way that was never possible in Old Testament times. Now, because of the Blood of Jesus and the availability of God's power through the Holy Spirit, we (the repentant) can live lives of liberty regardless of what sins we may have committed in the past. The Blood of Christ, when applied properly, deals a mortal blow to sin's power and all of the enemy's efforts to hold us in bondage.

ROMANS 8:1 *There is therefore now no condemnation to them who are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh (in carnality, self-will or one's own strength), but after the Spirit (being led and empowered by Him).*

ROMANS 8:2 *For the law of the Spirit of Life in Christ Jesus (the Holy Spirit ministers grace to us by this law) has made me free (has given me victory) from (over) the law of sin and death.*

This liberty was not available in Old Testament times where a person's past usually affected what they could or could not do throughout their whole lifetime. For instance, people were to be stoned to death if they committed murder or sexual sin (Deuteronomy 22:22). Others who were disfigured, were born out of wedlock or had impure racial ancestry were not to be permitted to enter the congregation of the Lord (Deuteronomy 23:1-3).

WALKING IN VICTORY THROUGH THE LAW OF LOVE

All that we give or do in Christ should be given or done from a willing heart, even if our flesh and emotions may be reluctant, or at

times pulling us forcefully in the opposite direction. Certainly the desire of the flesh and the clamour of the emotions can be ignored if we know the will and power of God in our heart and have purposed to obey Him through a quality commitment to Himself, as with a marriage vow. We then receive the power to obey as we yield to the Lord and His way, and so are able to absorb the graces of the Divine Nature in the knowledge of who we are in Christ. In this is victory, and the peace of God which passes understanding.

“. . . All that we give or do in Christ should be given or done from a willing heart, even if our flesh and emotions may be reluctant. . .”

In Old Testament times, it is probable that God’s Laws would have been generally obeyed out of compulsion, through a desire for self-preservation. Today, however, God’s commandments should not be obeyed out of compulsion, or an attitude such as, “If I don’t do this, I will be attacked by the enemy.” Rather, we should obey God’s Laws and the direction He gives from a heart of love, faith and gratitude for all that He has done for us.

The Spirit of God, through the Divine Nature, will empower us to overcome as we allow God to humble us. We can then, in the grace of the Lord, take up our cross of self-denial (James 4:6; 1 Peter 5:5-6). As Jesus taught, this is fundamental to the way of discipleship.

1 PETER 5:6 Permit yourselves therefore to be humbled under the mighty hand of God, in order that you He may exalt in an appropriate season: (Wuest)

MATTHEW 10:38 And he who takes not his cross, and follows after Me, is not worthy of Me (not worthy of the blessings afforded by the “victory” of the Cross). (E.S.B.)

THE CROSS OF SELF-DENIAL

LUKE 9:23 And He said to them all, "If any man will come after Me, let him deny himself (by the power of the Spirit), and take up his cross daily, and follow Me."

If one is to “*deny himself*” and “*take up his cross,*” then one must “*forget one’s self, lose sight of one’s self and one’s interests*” (Wuest). This means that for the Saint, the interest of Christ must be the greatest priority in his daily life. Self must be hidden in Christ positionally and experientially if the Saint is to begin to walk in victory. To “*take up his cross daily,*” the Christian must continually look towards the Cross of Calvary, understanding what the Cross has accomplished and afforded to them, and knowing that this could have only come by this means and this means alone.

“. . . Indeed our thoughts, desires and emotions must be God-inspired, and then owned by us. . .”

In order to “*deny himself*” properly, the Saint must, by faith, understand what it is to identify with Christ, in His death, at the Cross. By the grace of the Holy Spirit he must also understand that, in a spiritual sense, he has been raised with Christ, thus becoming a partaker of “*newness of life*” - the Divine Nature (2 Peter 1:4). Indeed if the Saint is to completely identify with Christ, they must deny their own strengths and abilities, even including their own thoughts, desires and emotions. Indeed our thoughts, desires and emotions must be God-inspired, and then owned by us.

It is interesting to note that at the time when the Gospels were written, the “cross” was a means by which death was administered. Therefore the metaphor which Jesus uses of the Disciple “*taking up his cross*” illustrates in a vivid way what is required of the Disciple, i.e. death to self - the denial of self-wants, self-rule and self-gratification.

Unless every morning there is a fresh “crucifixion of self,” we will not walk in righteousness - for every day we must go through the Cross to obtain the grace we need for that day, knowing and appreciating Jesus as Lord through personal, experiential relationship. In all we do, we must rely on God, seek His will and embrace it in the power afforded to us through the Cross. So we must lose our life (of self) in order to gain experientially a new life in Christ, full of the joy of the Lord and the power of the Spirit. Only by taking up our cross and denying self can we receive empowerment to both will and then do of God’s good pleasure. Then our relationship with Him will also deepen and develop.

Wuest comments on this very issue in regard to Jesus’ statement and commandment in the Gospels:

“ *“Let him deny himself.” The word is aparneomai (ἀπαρνεομαι). When used with the reflexive pronoun as it is here, it means “to forget one’s self, lose sight of one’s self and one’s interests.” The verb is ingressive aorist, speaking of entrance into a new state or condition. It is “Let him at once begin to lose sight of himself and his own interests.” Take up his cross. The cross was the instrument of death. Here it speaks of death to self.*

“*Follow Me.*” The word “follow” is akoloutheō (ἀκολουθεω), “to take the same road as another does.” It is used with the associative instrumental case. It is, “Let him follow with Me.” The idea is not that of following behind another, but that of accompanying the other person, taking the same road that he takes and fellowshiping with him along that road. The first two imperatives are aorist, giving a summary command to be obeyed at once. The “coming after” and the “taking up” are to be obeyed at once and are to be a once-for-all act. That is, these acts are to be looked upon as a permanent attitude and practice of life. The whole life is to be characterized by an habitual coming after and taking up of the cross. After having once for all given over the life to the Lord, the believer must hence-forward count it ever so given over. He is not his own anymore. He belongs to the Lord. He is the Lord’s property. The word “follow” however, is in the present imperative, which commands the doing of an action and its habitual, moment by moment continuance . . .

“. . . The idea is not that of following behind another, but that of accompanying the other person, taking the same road that he takes and fellowshiping with him along that road. . . ”

Translation. And having called the crowd, together with His disciples, to Himself, He said to them, “If, as is the case, anyone is desiring to come after Me as a follower of mine, let him at once begin to lose sight of himself and his own interests, and let him at once begin to take up his cross, and let him start taking the same road in company with Me, and let him continue to do so moment by moment.” ”¹

(underlines added)

THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN SURRENDER AND EMPOWERMENT

LUKE 14:26 *If any man come to Me (no exceptions), and hate (prefer) not his father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren, and sisters, yes, and his own life also (no affection, however strong, must be permitted to compete with or displace Christ), he cannot be My Disciple (once again, no exceptions!). (E.S.B.)*

LUKE 14:33 *So likewise, whosoever he be of you who forsakes not all that he has (puts the Lord above all, seeks Him first), he cannot be My Disciple.*

The empowerment needed to take up our cross daily and follow the Lord will only become a reality in our lives at an experiential level if we first purpose to surrender all to serve Him. This then needs to be an ongoing commitment - the surrender of one's life at all times to the Lord. We then need to be wholeheartedly open and receptive to His truths and purposes (His will for our life), and to act willingly on them, in faith. This is the only way we will gain the

power needed to live with this intent and therefore be enabled to become more than overcomers on a consistent basis (Romans 8:37-39; 1 John 5:4). Then through our actions of faith, God's promises will be realized:

HEBREWS 8:10 . . . I will put My laws into their mind, and write them in their hearts: and I will be to them a God, and they shall be to Me a people:

This means that He implants His Word and His will for our life in our mind and heart. This comes about as we seek truth and hear the truth of His Word, whether this comes through reading or studying the Word, or hearing anointed preaching and teaching, or a combination of all of these. Remember that God's wisdom can come even through a child, so we should always be ready to hear His truth. We should never discount any vessel the Lord may use.

As we then believe and yield to the truth God has placed in our mind and heart, not only does God give us the desire to act according to His Word, but also the power, through the graces of His Divine Nature, to do so. So all in all, it is God's grace which should be at work in us to perform His will in our lives.

"But with the Spirit of the living God" (2 Corinthians 3:3) speaks of Him moving on the heart, which produces a variety of graces that constitute a striking and beautiful evidence of one's conversion. *"Not in tables of stone, but in fleshy tables of the heart"* (2 Corinthians 3:3) contrasts the Law of Moses to the way in which His laws are written on our hearts today. God did not own the hearts of the Old Testament Saints because they were unregenerated. Thus He could not write His laws on their hearts. They had to do this, in some measure, themselves. The force of the comparison is that Moses' law was external. The law of the Spirit is internal (Jeremiah 31:33-34).

So today, the Laws of God are revealed by the Spirit of Truth. They are then written by Him on men's hearts as they accept and purpose to obey them in the strength of His grace. The spirit of the Law will also come to be understood at a much deeper level by those who seek God's truths and live in them by His grace.

The added grace in this is: When the Spirit writes His laws on the heart of a man, He also gives that man the grace to make these laws a living reality in his life. This takes place when that man

yields to the Spirit in all things so that he flows in the power of the Divine Nature and becomes one with his Saviour and Lord (Philippians 2:12-13).

“. . .The empowerment needed to take up our cross daily and follow the Lord will only become a reality in our lives at an experiential level if we first purpose to surrender all to serve Him. . .”

In the perfect law of love we are promised victory - for “*perfect love casts out fear*” and any other bondage as we allow God’s Word to take root in our lives (1 John 4:18).

A loving father will give his children direction so that they may live contented and profitable lives. Our Heavenly Father will also give us direction if we allow Him to, by listening to His commandments and then living in them, in the power of the Spirit. Through this act of our will (the willing obedience of the heart), we allow God to release His power of love into our life which energizes our very human nature. This power can legally, thereby spiritually and experientially, set us free from every bondage. Through the Divine Nature energizing our human nature, we can both love and desire to do God’s will with the power the Spirit gives to us. More of God and His power at work in our life and heart means more freedom for us to be the person we were created to be - an individual in God. Indeed over time and with consistent surrender and empowerment, our very character can be changed to become more Christlike. This is the sense of the following scripture, us allowing Christ to live in and through us as we daily take up our cross:

GALATIANS 2:20 I am crucified with Christ (as the Foundation of all Victory; Paul, here, takes us back to Romans 6:3-5): nevertheless I live (have new life); yet not I (not by my own strength and ability), but Christ lives in me (by virtue of me dying with Him on the Cross, and being raised with Him in newness of life): and the life which I now live in the flesh (my daily walk before God) I live by the faith of the Son of God (the Cross is

ever the object of my faith), Who loved me, and gave Himself for me (which is the only way that I could be saved). (E.S.B.)

ACTS 17:28 For in Him we live, and move, and have our being . . .

From God's love will come deliverance and protection. From a genuine heart commitment to obey, a true mature love will develop in our lives by the grace of God, producing lasting spiritual fruits which will glorify our Heavenly Father.

CONCLUSION

The whole Covenant of God has been legally fulfilled and all its benefits are available today to those who believe according to the Word.

“. . .The whole Covenant of God has been legally fulfilled and all its benefits are available today to those who believe according to the Word. . .”

Through Christ's finished work on the Cross He fulfilled the law of sacrifice which states that “*without shedding of blood (there) is no remission (forgiveness) of sin*” (Hebrews 9:22). In this way, the full measure of God's grace became available to mankind. The law of liberty in Christ Jesus can now operate in our lives to set us free from the law of sin and death in every area, as, through the Divine Nature, we meet the conditions of love, faith and obedience.

Knowing that the Old Covenant is part of the New, and the New is part of the Old, and it is all ONE COVENANT, let us turn to Deuteronomy Ch.30.

DEUTERONOMY 30:19 I (God) call heaven and earth to record this day against you (as a witness), that I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing:

therefore choose life, that both you and your seed may live:

DEUTERONOMY 30:9 And the Lord your God will make you plenteous in every work of your hand, in the fruit of your body, and in the fruit of your cattle, and in the fruit of your land, for good: for the Lord will again rejoice over you for good, as He rejoiced over your fathers:

DEUTERONOMY 30:10 If you shall hearken (here is the condition) unto the voice of the Lord your God, to keep His commandments and His statutes which are written in this Book of the Law (the Word of God), and if you turn unto the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul (this parallels Matthew 22:37-40).

DEUTERONOMY 30:20 That you may love the Lord your God, and that you may obey His voice, and that you may cleave unto Him: for He is your life, and the length of your days (this is speaking eternally, both physically and spiritually): that you may dwell (in total prosperity) in the land which the Lord swore unto your fathers, to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob, to give them (to us this is to dwell in the spiritual Promised Land - the Kingdom of God and all its blessings, the greatest one being HIS WILL being done in our lives).

These are God's promises and conditions which still apply to us today. This does not mean that we are to live under law, for Calvary's grace that empowers us to live in God's perfect will is what we need to be governed by. So it is by grace we live our life. In this we obey the commandments of God that constitute law. Yes we obey and so come under God's Laws that would cause us to be the blessed of God - but it is through grace that we live according to His Laws. This does not constitute bondage but rather liberty to be what we are meant to be in Christ. In the New Testament we are therefore now a people under grace. In the Old Testament God's people were a people under Law, because the grace needed for total forgiveness and cleansing did not become available until the Lamb of

God was offered on the altar of Calvary. And remember that their inability to keep this Law in every respect was meant to bring them to throw themselves on the mercy of God and so, in reality, point them towards the Cross. Yes we must obey the Law of God, but only under and by the grace of God that empowers us to do so, and gives us a pure, holy heart in Christ.

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Many people consider that the verses in Deuteronomy (which speak of God’s Covenant of blessing) are only directed towards the Jews, but this is not so. The tribes of Israel inherited the blessings of the Covenant through Abraham. However this was not meant for the Jews or Israel alone, the promise being given to Abraham and his “seed.” As scripture clearly states, those who are in Christ are Abraham’s seed and therefore heirs according to the promise. While as non-Jews, the Land of Israel is not ours to claim, salvation and God’s provision, spirit soul and body, are promised to both Gentiles and Jews alike.

Indeed the primary blessing of Abraham, as we have learned, was justification by faith. We as Christians are heirs of this wonderful blessing. Amen.

The Old Covenant has not passed away. Rather it has been fulfilled and is now in operation as the New Covenant. Indeed within the liberty we have in Christ, as spiritual beings, and if properly focused in our thinking, we will be compelled from the heart to obey God’s Laws - His eternal and unchangeable principles. However, we now obey God’s Laws not to achieve our position, but because of it. Our liberty, therefore, is not meant to be a cloak for sin, but a motivation to serve our Master’s desires - by His grace at work in us (Galatians 5:13-14).

God’s Word is a book of living promises, and as such, it is alive and powerful. God is thus sufficient to meet every need. He is watching over His Word to perform it in the lives of those who

would yield to Him, and it will not return to Him void (Jeremiah 1:12; Isaiah 55:11).

God is always moving on people's hearts to bring them into the knowledge of truth - for God's love never ceases, and it is His will that no-one should perish.

2 PETER 3:9 The Lord is not slack concerning His promise, as some men count slackness (if it seems as though God delays the fulfillment of His Promises, it is for the purpose of getting more people into the Kingdom of God: E.S.B.); but is longsuffering to us-ward (God suffers long with man, attempting to bring him to a place of Repentance: E.S.B.), not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance.

1 TIMOTHY 2:4 Who will have all men to be saved (spirit, soul and body), and to come unto the knowledge of the truth (the Gospel of Jesus Christ).

As we live a yielded life, depending on His grace to do His will, we too will seek the lost - for this is the Lord's passion and heart. As we seek the Lord's face and His will, this desire will be ours also.

***“ . . .we now obey God's Laws not to
achieve our position, but because of
it. . .by His grace
at work in us. . .”***

The time is short and the sand is running out in the hour glass. Indeed we are in the last days and the time of Jesus' return is drawing near. Many believe, in fact, that this is the last generation before Jesus returns for His Church, His Body of Believers. Until that day, our main purpose should be to tell the world that they can also become part of His Body and live with Him eternally.

So we should press on towards the goal of our high calling in Christ (Philippians 3:13-14) with a total commitment to serve our Lord and our fellow man - not by willpower of course but by the

resurrection power Christ has afforded us. In doing this, we will fulfill the two commandments on which all the Law and the Prophets are founded.

To God be all the glory.

For further information or teaching material to help you grow in the Christian faith, please visit:

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NOTES

NOTES

- 1 Wuest, K.S., Wuest's Word Studies From The Greek New Testament, Mk 8:34.

*"We have a vision
to see people living
in abundant life
by the power of God
through Jesus Christ"*



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