

The Law of God

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The law of God is arguably one of the least understood aspects of the Bible. Consequently, there exists today a diversity of conflicting views concerning Biblical law leading to a profound misunderstanding of its' purpose and function, the misapplication of numerous scriptures, and a lack of knowledge regarding specific elements of the law, many of which are rarely identified or explained correctly.

Various Christian groups today assert there are no longer any aspects of the law of God that remain applicable. Others conclude only a few specific elements are fundamental to Christian living, and still others conclude that all or nearly all aspects of the law remain. Many of these views are drawn from diverse interpretations of Bible passages thought to involve obedience to the law of God or His commandments.

The dilemma is well described in Wikipedia under the topic, Biblical law in Christianity,

Although Christianity by tradition affirms that the Five Books of Moses, also called the Pentateuch, are the inspired word of God, Christian tradition, in this case similar to Jewish tradition, denies that all biblical law (specifically the Mosaic covenant) applies directly to Christians, but different arguments are used to reach that conclusion and there are differences of opinion within Christianity as to which laws, if any, still apply. The predominant Christian view is that Jesus mediates a New Covenant relationship between God and his followers, according to the New Testament (Jeremiah 31:31–34; 1 Cor 11:23-25; 2 Cor 2–3; Luke 22:20; Heb 8–9). Christianity, almost without exception, teaches that this new covenant is the instrument through which God offers mercy and atonement to mankind. However, there are differences of opinion as to how the new covenant affects the validity of biblical law. The differences are mainly as a result of attempts to harmonize biblical statements to the effect that the biblical law is eternal (for example Exodus 31:16-17, 12:14-17) with New Testament statements that suggest that it does not now apply at all, or at least does not fully apply. Most biblical scholars admit the issue of the Law can be confusing and the topic of Paul and the Law is still frequently debated among New Testament scholars ... hence the various views (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Biblical_law_in_Christianity).

One may ask why a common understanding within modern Christianity cannot be attained regarding the function and application of God's law. The answer, appropriately enough, is found in the Bible itself.

The word of God is written in a way that most spiritual concepts cannot be properly comprehended unless the Bible is diligently studied and all relevant points on a particular subject are dutifully considered. It was written by the prophet Isaiah,

To whom will he teach knowledge, and to whom will he explain the message? Those who are weaned from the milk, those taken from the breast? 10 For it is precept upon precept, precept upon precept, line upon line, line upon line, here a little, there a little (Isa. 28:9-10, ESV).

Even so, we must be led by God's holy spirit and be willing to listen in order to attain the truth from scripture for it is Almighty God who provides knowledge, wisdom, and understanding to those who obey Him and keep His commandments,

For the LORD gives wisdom; from His mouth come knowledge and understanding. 7 He stores up sound wisdom for the upright; He is a shield to those who walk in integrity, 8 guarding the paths of justice, and He preserves the way of His godly ones. 9 Then you will discern righteousness and justice and equity and every good course. 10 For wisdom will enter your heart and knowledge will be pleasant to your soul; 11 discretion will guard you, understanding will watch over you, 12 to deliver you from the way of evil, from the man who speaks perverse things (Pr. 2:6-12, NASB throughout unless noted).

And we are witnesses of these things; and so is the Holy Spirit, whom God has given to those who obey Him (Ac. 5:32).

The one who keeps His commandments abides in Him, and He in him. We know by this that He abides in us, by the Spirit whom He has given us (1Jn. 3:24).

Faith in God is developed and demonstrated through obedience to Him. As a result, the faithful servant does not waver or doubt when he petitions his God and Father, who loves His children and gives generously to all.

But if any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God, who gives to all generously and without reproach, and it will be given to him. 6 But he must ask in faith without any doubting, for the one who doubts is like the surf of the sea, driven and tossed by the wind. 7 For that man ought not to expect that he will receive anything from the Lord, 8 being a double-minded man, unstable in all his ways (Jas. 1:5-8).

The reason for the diverse and conflicting views in this world's Christianity regarding the law of God is a profound ignorance resulting from an unwillingness to accept and walk in accordance with God's commands. It is through the application of the spiritual principles of the law in our mind and our lives that we come to understand the nature and character of God and His son, Jesus Christ. Without this insight through God's indwelling spirit we cannot comprehend the purpose or function of His divine law. God's ways and His thinking are far above the ways and thinking of man,

For My thoughts are not your thoughts, nor are your ways My ways," declares the LORD. 9 "For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are My ways higher than your ways and My thoughts than your thoughts (Isa. 55:8-9).

The natural thoughts of our carnal human minds are of the flesh and are therefore hostile towards the directives in God's divine law, as our minds are not inherently subject to the authority or jurisdiction of His law. Thus, the human mind is at once

unwilling and unable to subject itself to the law of God. Consequently, those who do not live in accordance with God's law operate in a purely physical (fleshly) mindset, regardless of how "religious" they might feel or how often they may attend church (Mt. 7:21-23).

God calls His servants to set their minds on His spirit rather than on the flesh (Rom. 8:12-14). Those who obey His law and commandments are granted His spirit, which reveals His mysteries and spiritual principles in the law, and thus belong to Christ and receive life,

For the mind set on the flesh is death, but the mind set on the Spirit is life and peace, 7 because the mind set on the flesh is hostile toward God; for it does not subject itself to the law of God, for it is not even able to do so, 8 and those who are in the flesh cannot please God. 9 However, you are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if indeed the Spirit of God dwells in you. But if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he does not belong to Him (Rom. 8:6-9).

The directive to submit to God and listen to His voice is taught throughout the Bible,

You shall follow the LORD your God and fear Him; and you shall keep His commandments, listen to His voice, serve Him, and cling to Him (De. 13:4).

For I solemnly warned your fathers in the day that I brought them up from the land of Egypt, even to this day, warning persistently, saying, "Listen to My voice" (Jer. 11:7).

Finally then, brethren, we request and exhort you in the Lord Jesus, that as you received from us instruction as to how you ought to walk and please God (just as you actually do walk), that you excel still more. 2 For you know what commandments we gave you by the authority of the Lord Jesus (1Thes. 4:1-2).

Jesus Christ demonstrates love toward his Father through obedience to God's commandments. Likewise he taught his disciples to follow him in the same manner,

If you keep my commandments, you will abide in my love; just as I have kept my Father's commandments and abide in His love (Jn. 15:10).

As Christ obeys his God and Father, we are to listen to his instruction,

Then a voice came out of the cloud, saying, "This is My Son, My Chosen One; listen to Him!" (Lk. 9:35)

We demonstrate our love for God when we live in obedience to His commandments, and we do so through faith. Faith is trust based on love.

For this is the love of God, that we keep His commandments; and His commandments are not burdensome (1Jn. 5:3).

The Bible characterizes those who keep the commandments of God and their faith in Jesus, as perseverant saints,

Here is the perseverance of the saints who keep the commandments of God and their faith in Jesus (Rev. 14:12).

The foundation of obedience to the law and commandments of God is faith. If we genuinely trust God we will listen to His commands out of love from a pure heart. However, we must be called by God so that we can be lead by His holy spirit and do what God has written in His word (Rom. 2:4). Then our thinking will be correctly established, enabling us to accurately comprehend the spiritual principles in God's word through obedience to His way,

Commit your works (deeds) to the LORD, and your thoughts will be established (Pr. 16:3).

The Bible is unequivocal concerning obedience to every word of God. Jesus Christ himself was explicit about this subject (Mt. 4:4).

The law, commandments, judgments, and testimony of Jesus, teach us God's way and there is no other. The difficulty most people have concerning God's law and commandments is they do not understand the origin of the law, what it is, or how it's correctly applied in our walk with God.

These important topics are dealt with in the following sections on the law of God.

This document is the collaborative work of individuals who believe God's truth should be given freely (Mt. 10:8; 1Cor. 2:12; 2Cor.11:7; Rom. 10:14-21) and the message of the one true God should be made available to all nations (Mt. 24:14) as a prerequisite to the return of Jesus Christ as King of kings (Mt. 17:10; 19:17; Mk. 9:11; Lk. 1:17; Rev. 19:11-16).

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