

LAW & GOSPEL
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LAW AND GOSPEL
Their Importance
Chapter 1

In these last days, the Spirit of God is moving in His church and amongst His people throughout the world. The call of God is for His people to come into a place of holiness before Him. Holiness is brought to us through our Lord Jesus Christ. No one can earn it or do anything to attain it on their own. It is a free gift from God.

We must learn how to walk in true holiness as the Lord intends us to. In Hebrews, the word of God tells us that without holiness no one will see the Lord.

God is established in our behalf as a blessing to us by guiding us into the way God would have us go. Seeing how the law of God relates to the good news of Jesus Christ will help us to understand the good news in an ever increasing way. God's love goes beyond anything we could ever imagine or think.

There is a spirit of lawlessness in the world today. It is a spirit that says, "I want to do what I want to do, and I don't care about anybody or anything else." This is a spirit of confusion which brings chaos into situations. It ruins homes and businesses, governments and churches. The person who is operating in this spirit sets himself up as God. He says, "I don't need God's laws. I don't need God's regulation. I don't want anybody putting any restrictions on me. I don't want any responsibility or any commitment to anybody but myself." You will find through this study that a spirit of lawlessness really says that a person doesn't even love himself. Such people don't care about anything.

I believe we are in those last days before the Lord Jesus returns. In 2nd Thessalonians, Chapter 2, we find a report concerning the last days. The scripture says: *"Concerning the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ and we being gathered to him, we ask you brothers not to become easily unsettled or alarmed by some prophecy, report or letter supposed to have come from us saying the day of the Lord has already come."*

If you are hearing reports like that, forget them. They're not true. The day of the

Lord has NOT already come. Scripture goes on to say: *"Don't let anyone deceive you in any way for that day will not come until the rebellion occurs and the man of lawlessness is revealed, a man doomed to destruction. He opposes and exalts himself over everything that is called God or is worshipped, and even sets himself up in God's temple, proclaiming himself to be God. Don't you remember when I was with you; I used to tell you these things? And now you know what is holding him back so that he may be revealed at the proper time. For the secret power of lawlessness is already at work."*

We see evidence of this all over the world. The spirit of lawlessness is already at work. People don't want restrictions, they don't want laws, and they don't want to keep the laws that exist. God's word goes on to say: *"But the one who now holds it back will continue to do so until he is taken out of the way and that the lawless one will be revealed, whom the Lord Jesus will overthrow with the breath of his mouth and destroy by the splendor of his coming. The coming of the lawless one will be in accordance with the work of Satan, displayed in all kinds of counterfeit miracles, signs and wonders and in every sort of evil that deceives those who are perishing. They perished because they refused to love the truth and so be saved."*

People actually refuse to receive the love gift of God and the truth of God in Jesus Christ. As a result, they will perish. Scripture says that they actually refused to love the truth, and be saved. For this reason, God sends them a powerful delusion so they will believe the lie and all will be condemned who have not believed the truth, but have delighted in wickedness. The spirit of lawlessness delights in wickedness. It doesn't want any commandments, statutes or judgments. The person feels he can do whatever he wants to do.

God's word tells us about the antichrist that will come in the last days. The antichrist brings a spirit of lawlessness, and wherever you find that spirit of lawlessness, you will also find a spirit of antichrist operating. Satan does not want God's commandments to be enforced. Satan does not want any of God's restriction, and he doesn't want anyone receiving the love of God either. As a result, Satan tries to make the law of God into an ugly thing, something to be hated. He tries to make people feel that God's laws inhibit and restrict them, that they aren't blessed, that they're burdened down. That is not the case.

It is our prayer that you understand the great freedom that comes from following

the law of Jesus Christ. We have liberty in Jesus Christ. Those who delight in following the commandments of God will find the great abundant life that Jesus promised them. I am excited about what the word of God, through the Holy Spirit, teaches us. I pray that you receive a renewed appreciation of the importance of having truth communicated to you, and the blessing that comes from doing what God says.

Examine your own life and look at your own family. If you let your children do whatever they want to do, what would happen in your home? Proverbs says that foolishness is bound up in the heart of a child. If you allow a child his own way, to make his own decisions, you'll find the end result will be confusion, and chaos, and all kinds of problems. This happens when commandments or rules are not enforced in the home. A home has to run in an orderly manner if it is to be blessed. A church has to run in proper order. A government has to run with ordered principles, and a business will fall apart if there isn't some kind of order to it. God is a God of order. The spirit of lawlessness goes against everything that is orderly.

Here are some words and instructions concerning the last days: That is why this study is so important. *“Mark this; There will be terrible times in the last days. People will be lovers of themselves, lovers of money, boastful, proud, abusive, disobedient to their parents, ungrateful, unholy, without love, unforgiving, slanderous, without self-control. They'll be brutal, not lovers of the good. They'll be treacherous, rash, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God. Having a form of godliness, but denying its power. Have nothing to do with them.”* (2nd Timothy 3:1-5)

In the last days, there will be folks having a form of godliness, but they will deny its power. Does it mean that people deny the power of God, deny healing and God's ability to work supernatural miracles and signs and wonders? No. It says these people "having a FORM of godliness, but denying its power." What is its power? The power of godliness. And they deny it.

The power of godliness has to do with holiness. It is the power that God gives His people in Jesus Christ to enable them to be who He says they are: sons and daughters of the living God. He is a holy God, and He says that His people are to be holy even as He is holy. The power of godliness enables us to be holy in thought, in word, and in deed.

There are many people today, as in Jesus' time, as in Paul's time, who did not want to live holy before God. They want to do things their own way. This is a sign of the last days. (2nd Timothy 3:_) The lawlessness will increase more and more. As this happens, God's grace and power, the power of godliness, will increase even more. Some people want to be wicked. They want to do wicked things that are against the commandments of God. Throughout time, from the fall of Adam, man has wanted to do what he wants rather than what God wants. That is the old, fallen nature, the selfish nature. Another word for it is rebellion, which, according to scripture, is as the sin of witchcraft.

Scripture tells us that God has established certain authorities in this world. In Romans 5:20 we read: *"When you were slaves to sin, you were free from the control of righteousness. What benefit did you reap at that time from the things that you are now ashamed of?"* These are people in lawlessness and sin, and *"Sin is a transgression of the law."* (1st John 3) People who are transgressing the law are bound by the law. They are under its authority. They hate the law because they want their own way.

Laws are given to stop sin. Most people with a spirit of lawlessness don't like the idea of going to a court and hearing a judge say, "You're guilty of sin. You're guilty of transgressing the law." They want to do away with the judge and the laws. They want to be free to do what they want to. But, praise the Lord, God will not allow people to do so. They may try, but they will not get away with it in the end. That is what the law is for: to stop that kind of behavior. The people who do these things, are not happy in themselves. They are not blessed. They do what they want to do, but they are not happy with it. So they run from one thing to another, trying to make things happen in their lives. Nothing good will happen until that person starts to follow God's commandments.

"What benefit did you reap at the time from those things that you are now ashamed of?" (Romans 5:21) He is talking to people who have come to the Lord Jesus. In many respects, they are ashamed of what they used to do. But, glory to God, if people have come to the Lord Jesus Christ, God has forgiven their sin. Everything that separated them from God, the transgression of the law, and the power of the law has been broken off their lives. God has given them a brand new way of living, a brand new life.

The walk of the Spirit of God does not make us subject to the law, but we obey it because we love to follow the commandments of God. In obeying the law, we are not subject to it. Those things that are against the law of God result in death. The wages of sin is death, but the gift of God through Jesus Christ is a brand new life. Glory to the Lord for a brand new life.

The benefit you reap leads to holiness. (Romans 5:22) What is the benefit? To know that your sin is forgiven and that God loves you. We can know that no matter what we have done in this life, good or bad, God has forgiven and cleansed us through Jesus Christ. The fruit that starts to grow in our lives leads to holiness. The end result is eternal life.

"The law was added that the trespass might increase, but where sin increased, grace increased all the more." (Romans 5) In other words, people were not left to just run on their own. The law was given by God to show sin for what it was. If there was no law, there would be no sin. If nobody said, "Hey, what you're doing is wrong," people would go along thinking that what they were doing was right. God, in His love, wouldn't let us think that way, and I thank Him every day for the privilege of knowing that.

We can't let our children raise themselves. We have to train them up in the way of the Lord, and when they get older, they won't depart from it. We must show the children what is right. It isn't something that comes naturally. How interesting that we never have to teach a child to do wrong. It seems to come naturally. Why? *"Foolishness is bound up in the heart of a child."* We have to teach our children to do what is right, and show them the difference between right and wrong.

When God set his law down, it was added that the trespass might increase, according to Romans 5:20. It shows sin for what it is. The person who then goes against the law is in a state of lawlessness or rebellion. Normally, when someone is seeking to do good, and finds that what they are doing is wrong, they will ask for forgiveness and change their ways. But the spirit of lawlessness won't do that. Scripture tells us: *"where sin increased, grace increased all the more."* Grace is God's undeserved kindness and blessing, His undeserved power to change from a state of doing wrong to a state of doing right. God makes it happen. When wrong behavior is brought to light, God gives the ability through Jesus Christ to actually

change so that bad behavior changes and is over and done with for good.

The result of grace increasing is so that *"just as sin reigned in death, so also grace might reign through righteousness to bring eternal life to people through Jesus Christ our Lord."* (Romans 5:21) As the state of wickedness increases in these days, God's grace and ability, His power and wisdom, His love and forgiveness, His mercy and justice will be increased. More and more lives will change, even as ours are being changed through the power of God working in us through Jesus Christ.

Many Christian people boast that they are not under the law. They believe they are free in Jesus to do anything they want to do. *"What shall we say then? Shall we go on sinning so that grace may increase even more? By no means."* (Romans 1:6) God says "No." God's people are not to continue living in sin because sin is a transgression of the law. Jesus Christ has freed us to do now what God says to do.

"We died to sin. How can we live in it any longer? Or don't you know that all of us who were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death. We were therefore buried with him through baptism into death in order that just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the father, we too may live a new life."

God has made us holy through the blood of Jesus Christ that was given for us on the cross. The penalty for our sin, for everything that separated us from God was paid for, and the penalty was removed. We are declared not guilty before God, and He has now given us His ability to want and to do what is His good pleasure. God is a holy God, and He wants His people to walk in holiness. We need to understand that God actually gives us the ability to live as His people.

God has established laws of creation – laws that work on a daily basis, that keep order in the creation. The planets all move in order. There are physical laws that keep things in order and peace. In the same way, God gives laws so that order and peace may benefit those who keep those laws. God knows what is best for us. Those who violate God's commandments set themselves outside of His blessings.

In man the creation was subject to the laws of God. God commanded Adam. Later He commanded Moses and Abraham. Now He commands you and me. We

find that Jesus, Himself, was the perfect example which we are to follow, for He kept the law of God perfectly. As a result, through Him we are able to keep the commandments of God. We want to because we love God. Jesus said: *"If you love me, keep my commandments."*

Long before the law was put together at Mount Sinai, we find that there was a law against murder (Genesis 9:6). God has established laws from the very beginning. The entire creation operates on a law basis. We must not see the law as being negative but as being good. This must be understood. A spirit of lawlessness causes people to look negatively at God's authorities, but the law was given so that people might be blessed.

Clearly the law was not given at Mount Sinai. (Genesis 9:6) It was given long before by the Lord. Laws are eternal creation principles. Job kept the laws of God. Abraham (Genesis 26:5) was blessed because he kept the commandments of God. The Lord promised Abraham: *"I will make your descendants as numerous as the stars in the sky. I will give them all these lands and through your offspring all nations on earth will be blessed. Because Abraham obeyed me and kept my requirements, my commands, my decrees and my laws."* (Genesis)

The blessing of God rested upon Abraham because he obeyed and kept God's requirements, commands, decrees and laws. Abraham also observed the tithing principle wherein God promises to open up the windows of heaven and pour out a blessing upon His people. (See also Hebrews 7:4-10). The law of God has not been done away with, but it is here for our blessing. We are saved through faith in Jesus Christ apart from the works of the law, but the law of God is still here to show us the ways in which we can be blessed, the principles of God that help us to have a brand new life.

When Satan violated God's principles, (was disobedient to God), he fell from the heavenlies. He desired to be God himself, and as a result, he was thrown out. Then threw this entire world into chaos. In Genesis, Chapter One, we read: *"In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth."* Verse two says, *"and the earth was without form and void."* It sounds inconsistent. Something must have happened between verses one and two.

It is my opinion that when Satan was kicked out of heaven, he came down and

destroyed the creation of God. Then God began to create again. God is very orderly, and He has a reason for everything He does. Many times we may not understand the reason, but God does, and that is all that matters. He wants to establish His principles and His ways in the earth.

When man was created, he was under God, and subject to Him. The spirit of lawlessness says, "I don't want God, or anybody else telling me what to do." The antichrist, who is coming, will have that same spirit of lawlessness, and he will cause people to delight in wickedness and to seek things that are anything but God. As a result, people will, by their own choice, refuse to receive the love of God, refuse to do what God says... and be lost forever.

Unfortunately, there are people who want to do away with the law. They don't like answering to authority. In many respects, this is happening even in the Christian church. God's people misunderstand the true meaning of the law and our freedom in obeying it. We have a spirit of liberty in Jesus, but are now under the law of Christ. That law is actually a freedom law. It isn't a freedom to go and do whatever the flesh desires, as noted in Romans 6, but it is the freedom to live in a state of holiness. We are holy because of the blood of Jesus. It is His free gift. We make a choice to love God and serve Him, and through the ability He gives us, we are able to keep His commandments.

God gives us the ability to want to do his good pleasure. (Philippians 3:32) In addition, the commandments of God are not a burden to us, they are not grievous. (1st John 5:3) Why not? Because we love God. Jesus said *"If you love me, keep my commandments. (Do what I say)."* Abraham was blessed because he kept the commandments of God.

At Mount Sinai, as the laws were given to Moses, God put together the laws of the land for His people, the Israelites as a form of government. At that time the ordinances of God were given to show them how to live and how they were to relate to one another. There were many ordinances, and they were all for the good of the people.

With the commandment, *"Honor your father and mother,"* the promise is: *"That you may be blessed and live on the earth and everything will go well with you."* It is a wonderful promise, and it is received by following the commandment. In this

case, it is in honoring parents. The person who doesn't honor father and mother can't expect to receive this blessing.

God has established parents to train up their children in the ways of the Lord, and when they are old, they will not depart from Him. It is a responsibility given to parents, and when they do their part, God does His part. Those children will grow up taught of the Lord, and their lives will be blessed. One of the prime responsibilities of parents is to teach children right from wrong, and to know the difference. They will learn the blessing that comes in doing what is right, and the curse that comes in doing what is wrong.

In the book of Galatians there seems to be a contradiction when Paul speaks about a law that has been done away with. What law is that? What is the promise to Abraham that seems to do away with the law? *"The promises were spoken to Abraham and to his seed." The Scripture does not say "and to seeds," meaning many people, but "and to your seed," meaning one person who is Christ. The law, introduced 430 years later after Abraham, does not set aside the covenant previously established by God and thus do away with the promise. For if the inheritance depends on the law, then it no longer depends on a promise; but God in his grace gave it to Abraham through a promise."* (Galatians 3:16-18)

The promise was indicated through a covenant sign, which is circumcision. (Acts 7:8) The law that was introduced 430 years later does not set aside the covenant previously established by God, and thus do away with the promise. Four hundred and thirty years after Abraham, Moses came to Mount Sinai when the law of God and the ordinances were established to make a unified nation. For any nation to be unified there must be concrete laws and ordinances to be obeyed. Many of these ordinances had nothing to do with the promise, which was fulfilled in Jesus Christ.

Salvation is not based on keeping the law, but upon faith in Jesus Christ. Ephesians 2:8-9 says that *"we are saved by grace through faith, not by works lest any man should boast."* This means I cannot be saved by my works, my good deeds, or by anything I do. Nobody can keep the law of God perfectly. If one commandment is broken, they are all broken. Paul tells this to the Galatians, pointing out that no one is saved by the keeping of the law, but by faith in Jesus Christ.

The problem in Galatia was that the Judaisers were teaching that circumcision was a requirement of salvation. Paul was adamantly trying to communicate to the people that circumcision did not save them. Only faith in Jesus Christ could save anyone. Interestingly, the promise to Abraham was sealed through the sign of circumcision, and Acts 7:8 makes it clear that it was the sign of the promise.

At Mount Sinai, the law was given and put together again into a unified fashion for the people. Along with the Ten Commandments which God wrote with His own finger upon the two tablets, there were many spoken ordinances given to Moses which he wrote down. Amongst those were restrictions and ways to deal with one another. For instance, an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth. If you kill someone, you can expect to be killed. If you commit adultery, you will be killed. There were many ways that were given at that time to keep the nation in order.

Since then, through the Lord Jesus Christ, God has given a new order for His kingdom people today. The blood of Jesus has set us free. God has done away with all the various sacrifices that were necessary to pay for the sin of the people. To pay the price, for instance, they would have to offer different sacrifices by the priests, they had different Sabbaths on which the day of rest was established when God's people offered sacrifices for the sin of the people. Those have all been done away with through the Lord Jesus Christ.

On the days of atonement in which the penalty for sin was removed because of the blood offering of the goats and bulls, payment was given and the people were set free. The blood of Jesus at the cross has paid the penalty for all of our sin, and there is no more need for sacrifices for sin. God has paid the price, and that is a settled issue.

The Judaisers of Galatia were bringing pressure on the people, trying to make them go back to the old ordinances of the commandments given at Sinai. There is a difference between the commandments, judgments, and statutes of God which are eternal, and the ordinances of God such as circumcision. In the Old Testament, circumcision was the sign of the chosen people. In the New Testament, faith in Jesus is the sign of a born again person who loves God and confesses that Jesus Christ is Lord. Our salvation does not depend upon circumcision or any ordinances such as what we can or cannot eat, drink, or wear. Our salvation depends upon faith

in Jesus Christ alone, apart from the works of the law.

In Galatians 3:19 we note the purpose of the law, and see that a whole order of religious and worship service was given to the people of Israel at Sinai. The purpose of the law was added because of transgressions, until the seed to whom the promise referred to had come, namely Jesus Christ. The law was put into effect through angels by a mediator.

Sometimes people read the Bible and see that the law is not differentiated from the other laws and commandments. When it says "law," it often refers to the Ten Commandments or the statutes, judgments, rituals or ordinances. What was done away with was the atonement sacrifices (the blood offerings) in order to forgive the people of their sins. This had to be done a number of times during the year, and none was a lasting sacrifice because they had to be repeated. In Jesus Christ (the seed referred to, who was the promise,) the old order ended. The old covenant was over.

In Galatia, the people were falling back into observing the rituals and the rites of the ordinances that were given on Mount Sinai. Paul was concerned for those people. *"Formerly when you did not know God you were slaves to those who by nature are not Gods. But now that you know God, or rather are known by God, how is it that you are turning back to those weak and miserable principles. Do you wish to be enslaved by them all over again? You are observing special days, months, seasons and years. I fear for you that somehow I have wasted my efforts on you."* (Galatians 4:8-11)

Paul was concerned that the people were going back to the older rituals and ordinances that were spoken to Moses on Mount Sinai. Paul said we are not under those any longer in Jesus Christ. We are free from all those special days in which blood offerings were given for the forgiveness of sins. Jesus paid for it all, and there is nothing more we can do. The reason Paul was so concerned was because of the people who were trying to bring the Christians back into bondage. It is bondage to have to observe certain days to make sacrifices when God has said it is all over, you don't have to do that any more. The blood of Jesus paid the price once and for all.

There are people who believe that if they deny themselves and don't eat certain things, they will make points with God. There is fear in many people who think

they are not saved because they don't do certain things. Friends, I want you to know that the blood of Jesus at the cross has paid the price for everything that we have done in this life for better or for worse. Forgiveness of sins and salvation is through Jesus Christ alone. You don't have to question your salvation or be in fear about it. You can know for a fact that if you love God, and confess with your mouth that Jesus Christ is your Lord, and believe in your heart that he was raised from the dead, you will be saved. That is God's promise. You are what the Bible calls "born again," and the life of God has come into you.

In Galatia, they were saying that you had to keep all the ordinances to be saved. If that was the case, we would go right back under the old works salvation, in which case nobody would ever be saved because no one could earn their way to God. No one could please God by even the most wonderful works. He is not pleased through our works, but through our faith in Jesus Christ. *"It is no longer I who lives but Christ who lives in me and the life I now live I live by the faith of the son of God."* (Galatians 2:20) In other words, God gave me faith to believe Jesus Christ is Lord, and He will give anyone that faith.

Paul dealt with the same topic with the people in Colossae. There were people deceiving the folks and getting their focus off Jesus Christ, while making rules about what to eat, what to drink, etc. *"When you were dead in your sins, the uncircumcision of your sinful nature, God made you alive with Christ not because of what you did but because of what God did through Jesus Christ in his love. He forgave us all of our sins having cancelled the written code with its regulations. And we note regulations and ordinances, that were against us, that stood opposed to us. He took it away nailing it to the cross. And having disarmed the powers and authorities he made a public spectacle of them, triumphing over them by the cross."* (Colossians 2:13)

Verse 16 goes on to say: *"Therefore, do not let anyone judge you by what you eat or drink or with regard to a religious festival, a new moon celebration, or a Sabbath day. These are a shadow of the things that were to come; the reality, however, is found in Christ."* When Jesus Christ came into the earth and gave his blood, these things which were a shadow of the things to come were done away with. All of the blood offerings in the Old Testament were a shadow of what was to come when Jesus, the Paschal Lamb, would give himself as the perfect sacrifice for sin once and for all.

God has made us right with him through Jesus Christ. This is exciting. Any desire or attempt on our part to do these works in order to be saved is futile. It is vain worship, the Bible says, empty worship which is not pleasing to God. We were saved only by faith in Jesus Christ. The works that I do now, keeping the Ten Commandments and other good deeds, I do because I love God. As we continue in this study, we will learn principles to make us more effective in our walk with God in practical every day Christian living. We will find the tremendous blessing God has for us as we simply do what He says to do.

Ephesians, chapter two tells us again that Jesus Christ is the only way to salvation. Faith in Jesus is the only way to the blessing of God. We're not saved by keeping the commandments, but we keep the commandments because we love God. It is God's ability working in and through us that enables us to have the abundant life that God has promised in Jesus. We are to work out our own salvation (Philippians 2:12), meaning that since God is working in us (verse 13) enabling us to will and to do His good pleasure, we are now able to do it. What we have to do is watch our lives to keep ourselves from temptation, to stay in a position where we won't be tempted.

"As for you, you were dead in your transgressions and sins in which you used to live when you followed the ways of this world and of the ruler of the kingdom of the air, the spirit who is now at work in those who are disobedient." (Ephesians 2:1) Working in the heart of a person who is disobedient to God's commandments is the spirit of the ruler of the kingdom of the air, which we know from the Bible, is Satan. That spirit works in people who choose to act in a spirit of lawlessness, rather than obeying God.

The Bible says these people are under Satan's control. They don't realize it, thinking they are making their own decisions and choices, but they are really deceived. We have but one master. We either serve God and follow His commandments, or the devil and his ways. People who serve God are blessed. People who serve the devil are cursed. Those who seek to please themselves are not honoring the Lord, but the devil.

"All of us who also lived among them at one time gratifying the craving of our sinful nature following its desires and thoughts. Like the rest we were by nature

objects of wrath." (Ephesians 2:3) Everybody lived like this at some point before coming to Jesus. What people often don't realize is that the person who chooses to go against God's commandments is under His wrath.

"But because of his great love for us, God, who is rich in mercy, made us alive with Christ even when we were dead in transgressions. It's by grace you have been saved." (Ephesians 2:4, 5) That is God's free gift, His loving gift that saved us. Not our works, nor observing rituals and rites, or keeping certain ordinances. It is through God's grace, and it is undeserved by us. God said, "I love those people, and I want to give myself for them so that they might have my life." What a precious gift.

"God has raised us up with Christ and seated us with him in the heavenly realms in Christ Jesus in order that in the coming ages he might show the incomparable riches of his grace expressed in his kindness to us in Christ Jesus." In other words, God wants us blessed. The only way we can get that blessing is through Jesus Christ we gave His blood for us, paying the penalty, or price for our separation from God. That is why the blood atonement, the blood covenant is so important for God's people.

God's word tells us, *"For we are God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do."* It's exciting to know there is divine destiny for our lives. God has a plan and purpose for each of our lives. When we follow His will in obedience to Him, by faith in His Word and His promises, God's perfect plan is accomplished in us. He is honored and glorified, and we come to the realization that we are created for more than what this world has to offer. We are created for life with God forever and ever as His children. God has made it all possible for us in Jesus Christ.

As we live for God in holiness, we must always be on guard against subtle attacks from the enemy. Paul cautioned the Galatians about recognizing the difference between the works of the flesh (by observing the law) and the Spirit of God. *"You foolish Galatians. Who has bewitched you? Before your very eyes Jesus Christ was clearly portrayed as crucified. I would like to learn just one thing from you. Did you receive the Spirit by observing the law or by believing what you heard? Are you so foolish, after beginning with the Spirit, are you now trying to attain your goal by human effort? Have you suffered so much for nothing, if it really*

was for nothing? Does God give you his Spirit and work miracles among you because you observe the law or because you believe what you heard?" (Galatians 3:1-5)

Often when Paul responded to a situation, he responded to a problem. In order to get that problem resolved, he had to blow away the opposition. He had to deal with heresy very clearly, and sometimes he went to extremes to deal with the false teaching.

What Paul was dealing with in Galatia was not the law of God known as the Ten Commandments or the judgments or statutes. He was dealing with the ordinances which were given at Mount Sinai for practical living for the people of Israel. There were volumes of laws given to help the people live together as a godly nation. They had special days to observe for certain sacrifices. That is what Paul was reacting to in this scripture. Circumcision was one of the issues. Those people believed circumcision was necessary to be a true child of God. Paul said faith in Jesus Christ was enough.

Paul reminded the Galatians that they didn't receive the Spirit because they observed the law (or did rituals). "You have received the Spirit because you have believed in the Lord Jesus Christ. You have seen miracles happen because you believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, not because you observe the rituals and rites of the law." There is clear distinction here. In most Bibles you will find the word "law" is used to sum up everything, whether it is the Ten Commandments or rituals and rites.

Paul said to the Galatians, *"Consider Abraham. He believed God and it was credited to him as righteousness."* (See also Genesis 15:6.) *"Understand then that those who believe are children of Abraham. The scripture foresaw that God would justify the Gentiles by faith and announced the gospel in advance to Abraham. All nations will be blessed through you. So those who have faith are blessed along with Abraham, the man of faith."* (Galatians 3:6-9)

People have taken scriptures out of Galatians and said they are not under the law anymore. They say the law has no place in their lives through faith in Jesus Christ. That statement is not exactly true. They quote passages that those who have faith are blessed along with Abraham, the man of faith. That is true. The people who have faith in Jesus and in the word of God are blessed, and they will never be

ashamed or suffer loss because He is with them. God is with all His people who have faith in Him.

However, Paul was reacting to a situation in Galatia where the people were trying to force rituals on people for salvation, and he went against that with everything he had. To get the full truth concerning the law and the gospel and how they work together, we have to use *all* of the word of God, not just certain passages of Scripture, nor are we to sort them out to meet our own purposes.

Abraham was a man of faith, and he was blessed. He believed God and it was credited to him as righteousness, as recorded in Genesis 15:6. *"You foolish man. Do you want evidence that faith without deeds is useless? Was not our ancestor Abraham considered righteous for what he did when he offered his son Isaac on the altar?"* (James 2:20-24) Abraham was commanded by the Lord to offer up Isaac on the altar. Then God provided a supernatural manifestation of His Spirit and a ram was caught in the thicket. The ram was offered in place of Isaac. Abraham was obedient to follow God's commandment, and he was considered righteous for his obedience.

Paul's emphasis to the Galatians was faith, not obedience to the commandments of God. He was reacting to the people who demanded works for salvation. He taught that we are saved by faith in Jesus alone, not by works lest anybody should boast. In James we see the flip side: Faith without works is dead. Abraham was considered righteous for his faith and his works. *"You see that his faith and his actions were working together. His faith was made complete by what he did."* (James 2:22)

There are many Christian people saying they have got faith in Jesus, and they love God, but their lives are anything but what God would have them to be. God says that without holiness, nobody will see Him. He intends for His law and His commandments to work together. Works should follow faith. As in Abraham's case, his faith and his actions worked together, and his faith was made complete by his actions. Our faith and the commandments of God work hand in hand to complete the whole work.

"And the scripture was fulfilled that says Abraham believed God and it was credited to him as righteousness. And he was called God's friend. You see that a

person is justified by what he does and not by faith alone." (James 2:23, 24) That would appear to be a contradiction, but it isn't. Paul said in Galatians that we are not saved by keeping rituals and rites. We are saved through faith in Jesus. James tells us that if we are really saved and declared not guilty because of the blood of Jesus, then out of our love for God and thankfulness for what He has done for us, we want to do what He says. A person is justified by what he does, and not by faith alone.

Many people claim to have faith, but the proof is in their lives – in what they do. If they really have saving faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, they will do what He says. *"In the same way was not even Rahab, the prostitute, considered righteous for what she did when she gave lodging to the spies and sent them off in a different direction."* (James 3:25) Her action was remembered, and because of it, she was later considered with the promised people.

"As the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without deeds is dead." (James 2:26) Faith without works is no faith. Truly saving faith requires obedience to the commandments of God. Our faith actions mean we believe God at His promise. When God says, "You do this, and I'll do that," we obey because we love Him and are thankful for His goodness. The blessing of God then rests on us.

When we say, "Jesus, you are my Lord," we say, "Jesus, you control me – my thoughts, my words, my deeds. I love you. I submit myself to you. I don't have a spirit of lawlessness. I want to do what you tell me to do." When we come to this point, then everything we set our hand to prospers to God's glory, to our good, and as a result, other people get blessed as well.

All who rely on observing the law are under a curse, for it is written, *"Cursed is everyone who does not continue to do everything written in the book of the law."* (Galatians 3:10) Paul said that nobody can be declared not guilty before God by observing the law because nobody can observe the law perfectly. If we break one of the commandments, we break all of them. A person who says that he is a child of God because he keeps the commandments of God is false. Nobody can keep them perfectly by his own ability. It is only through Jesus Christ that we can keep them, not through our own ability.

"Law is not based on faith. On the contrary, the man who does these things will

live by them. Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law by becoming a curse for us. For it is written, 'cursed is everyone who is hung on a tree.' He redeemed us in order that the blessing given to Abraham might come to the Gentiles through Jesus Christ so that by faith we might receive the promise of the Spirit." (Galatians 3:12-14)

Jesus had to pay the price because the law had to be kept. The requirements to take away the curse of the law had to be met. The only one who could meet it was Jesus Christ. He kept the law of God perfectly. He fulfilled it in every respect, every requirement, every jot and tittle. He kept the word of God, and He then became the perfect blood sacrifice for us, and He took our place. In other words, He took our separation from God upon Himself and gave us His right standing with God.

This is an amazing deal that God, in His love, worked out for us. The wages of sin, which was death, was cancelled. Jesus is now seated at the right hand of the Father in all glory and honor. We who have received Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior have now been given the same status as Jesus. We are seated with Him in the heavenly places by position. Now as we live this life, because we love God, we want to keep His commandments and do what He says. By so doing, the blessing of God rests upon us in this life.

We look forward to the hope of the resurrection of the dead in which we will rise to meet Jesus in the air when He comes. This will happen just like God's Word tells us. We don't need to be concerned about it. All we need to be concerned about is thanking God every day for our salvation in Jesus Christ, and being obedient to Him. By so doing, others will receive the love of God in and through us.

LAW AND GOSPEL
Purpose and Relationship
Chapter 2

The purpose of the law was added because of transgressions until the seed to whom the promise referred to had come. (Galatians 3:19) God's promises do not cancel out the law of God, nor does the law of God cancel out His promises.

God gave the law to hinder people from doing just whatever they want to do, and also to give people direction in their lives. We all need direction and guidance. The law was given to curb sin and to keep people from going outside of God's boundaries.

"Is the law therefore opposed to the promises of God. Absolutely not! For if a law had been given that could impart life, then righteousness would certainly have come by the law." (Galatians 3:21) But the Lord told us through Paul that the promises of God don't do away with the law of God, and the law of God is not in opposition to the promises.

If the law could give a person righteousness, or right standing with God, then it would certainly need no other vehicle. But the law could not do this. It could only guide people and show them what right standing. The law could not of itself empower a person to be in right standing with God. That is why Jesus had to come. He is the vehicle. He is the way, the truth and the life. No man can come to God except through Him. He is the only way a person can be made right with God, the only way a person can be made holy.

We may do all kinds of good things and try to be right with God in our own way, but we would never make it. Therefore, the law came into effect, to show us our separation from God, to show us our disobedience. One sin or act of disobedience against God's law violates all of the law. In Romans 3, God's Word tells us that all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God. No one on their own, in their own striving, their own efforts, can be right with God.

The law shows us our sin, our attitudes, our thoughts, words, and deeds that are

out of line with God's holiness and His best. As a result, it drives us to the Lord Jesus Christ. We see that if a law could be given that could impart life, then righteousness would certainly have come by the law. But it can't. And so, righteousness comes through Jesus Christ. It is God's provision to make us right with Him.

Scripture declares that the whole world is a prisoner of sin, so that what was promised through faith in Jesus Christ might be given to those who believe. (Galatians 3:22) As we begin to see that everyone falls short of the glory of God (and the law of God shows it to be true), then we will see a need for a savior. There is a need for a way that people can come into right standing with God. The vehicle is through faith in Jesus Christ, which is God's free gift. It is His gift of love to us so that we may have the life which comes from God eternally.

"Before this faith came we were prisoners and held prisoners by the law." (Galatians 3:23) The law showed us that nobody could stand before God in holiness, nor have life with Him. We are locked up by the law until faith should be revealed. Until Jesus Christ came and fulfilled the law in our behalf, nobody had a right place with God. No one. So the law was put in charge, in verse 24, to lead us to Christ that we might be justified, or declared not guilty by faith.

The term for "lead us" means to utterly enslave or to bring into bondage. One of the functions of the law was to lead us to Christ, to enslave us utterly, to bring us into bondage. We were totally in bondage to the slavery of sin, and the law confirmed that. There was no way for anyone to have life with God, and finally in the end find out that everything is not okay.

Laws are for our good. People need to know the boundaries, to know what is acceptable and what isn't. There will be freedom as they begin to understand what they can or cannot do.

Through Jesus we have been declared not guilty by God, and are no longer under the supervision of the law. In other words, the law is not for believers who are walking with God. As Paul stated in Romans, the law is for unbelievers, for rebellious people, for those who are going against the things of God. It drives them to the Lord Jesus Christ because it shows them their sin, and how much against God they actually are. The law, interestingly enough, brings into bondage what it

actually does at that point. It says you can't get away with this anymore, you are held responsible and accountable before God for your actions and behavior.

People come to a point of tremendous freedom when they acknowledge their need of help. God, in His love, says, "I'm right here. I'll help you. Call upon me in the day of trouble." That day of trouble is when people come to the point of conviction in their hearts that they are lost, they have no way to turn, they can't be right with God, and are lost eternally unless they receive the love of God in Jesus Christ.

"It is for freedom that Christ has set us free. Stand firm then and do not let yourselves be burdened again by a yoke of slavery." (Galatians 5:1) Slavery to what? Slavery to sin. Slavery or bondage to the law. Remember, the law holds those who have not been set free by Jesus Christ in bondage and slavery, those who have not recognized their sin, those who have not turned to God for help, those who think it is okay to live any way they want to. The law holds them in slavery. They are accountable and responsible for their actions.

That freedom is not to sin, but to obey God, with freedom to experience the abundant life that Jesus promised. (Romans 6:18) *"All things are lawful for us but not all things are profitable [helpful]."* *I will not allow myself to be brought under the power of anything."* (1st Corinthians 6:12) What is Paul getting at? He is stating the fact that we are free in Jesus, that all things are lawful for us now, but not everything is helpful.

Sin is not helpful because it separates us from God. Disobedience to God's commandments is not helpful because it separates us from the blessing of God that we can experience in Jesus.

The people in Galatia, the Judaisers, were trying to bring the people back into the bondage of the old ceremonial rituals and rites which Paul says we are free from in Jesus as far as salvation is concerned. We don't have to do these things to be right with God. Faith in Jesus is what makes us right with God, and because of that faith in Him, we want to do what He says.

"Mark my words. I, Paul, tell you that if you let yourselves be circumcised Christ will be of no value to you at all." (Galatians 5:2) Circumcision is the issue in

Galatians. It is the sign of the old covenant. The new covenant is based on the promises of God through faith in Jesus Christ. Paul explains that if you have to be circumcised now, after coming to Jesus Christ (you feel it's necessary in order to be right with God), then it is all for nothing. You are going back into bondage. Christ will be of no value to you if circumcision is what saved you and made you a child of God rather than Jesus.

"And again I declared to every man who lets himself be circumcised that he is obligated to obey the whole law," which includes all of the ceremonial laws, all the rituals, everything that Jesus had done away with through His blood shed at the cross. One would have to go back and celebrate again all the ceremonial days where bulls and goats were offered so the blood of those animals would pay the price for the sin. One would have to go back into those things on a daily basis to fulfill the old covenant. In the new covenant, Jesus paid the price once and for all so we don't have to go back into those things.

Jesus said, *"My teaching is not my own. It comes from him who sent me. If anyone chooses to do God's will, he will find out whether my teaching comes from God or whether I speak on my own. He who speaks from God or on his own does so to gain honor for himself, but he who works for the honor of the one who sent him is a man of truth, there is nothing false about him. Has not Moses given you the law? Yet not one of you keeps the law. Why are you trying to kill me?"* (John 7:16-19)

The crowd answered, "you are demon possessed." Jesus replied, *"I did one miracle, and you are all astonished. Yet, because Moses gave you circumcision (though actually it did not come from Moses, but from the patriarchs), you circumcise a child on the Sabbath. Now if a child can be circumcised on the Sabbath so that the law of Moses may not be broken, why are you angry with me for healing the whole man on the Sabbath? Stop judging by mere appearances, and make a righteous judgment."* (John 7:21-24)

Circumcision was the sign of the old covenant which was given to Abraham. It was the sign between God and His chosen people. But now, in Jesus, there is a circumcision of the heart where God changes it. He doesn't deal with an external sign, but with an internal one. The law of Moses was summed up in that circumcision, and that is what made a person a child of God. The problem arose because people were trying to be justified by the law, declared not guilty by the law.

In being circumcised, they would claim they were justified and made right before God. Paul said, "No, that's not the case. You're made right with God through faith in Jesus Christ."

In Galatians 5:4-6 we read: *"You who are trying to be justified by the law have been alienated from Christ; you have fallen away from grace. But by faith we eagerly await through the Spirit the righteousness for which we hope. For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision nor uncircumcision has any value."* (Galatians 5:4-6) In other words, the circumcision doesn't have value or purpose anymore. It doesn't matter whether a person is circumcised. *"The only thing that counts is faith in Jesus Christ, faith expressing itself through love."* (Galatians 5:6) That's all that counts.

When people say, "I love you," it can take on many different forms. It is a word people have discussed for years and years. What is love? They say all that matters is love. Now that I am a Christian, all that matters is love. I had some problems with that because when I deal with people, I find that many times anything but love is being communicated through words and deeds. I started asking myself, "What is love? What's it all about?"

God gave me a passage out of 2nd John 6 to show me what love is. *"And this is love, that we walk in obedience to his commands. As you have heard from the beginning, his command is that you walk in love."* We learn from this that love is obeying the commandments of God. Many people are trying to do away with the commandments of God. Some ministries teach that we need not keep them anymore. I find that very difficult to believe, but it is happening. This is part of the deception in the end days.

How can you really know what love is unless you have some concrete guidelines as to what love is? The Lord, speaking through John, says. *"... this is love, that we walk in obedience to His commands."* There must be some guidelines for love because people perceive it in many different ways. The more you are around people the more you find people have different ways of expressing love. Many ways aren't necessarily how God defines love.

Further guidelines for love: *"Let no debt remain outstanding, except the continuing debt to love one another, for he who loves his fellowman has fulfilled the law. The commandments, 'Do not commit adultery.' 'Do not murder.' 'Do not*

steal.’ ‘Do not covet,’ And whatever other commandments there may be are summed up in this one rule: ‘Love your neighbor as yourself.’ Love does no harm to its neighbor; therefore love is the fulfillment of the law.” (Romans 13:8-10)

God has set down His law and commandments to us in love. All the above commandments pertain to the second tablet of the law in which God tells us how to love one another.

The first tablet of the law dealt with how to love God. When Jesus was confronted with the question of which is the greatest of the commandments, He said, *"First love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your mind, with all your soul. Secondly, love your neighbor as yourself."* Jesus, referring to Leviticus and Deuteronomy, was communicating to the people the summation of the commandments of God.

Four commandments explain how we are to expressly love God. One, simply have no other gods before him. Two, take not His name in vain. Three, make no graven images. Four, remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy. Six days shall a man work and the seventh shall he declare holy to the Lord. Here are four concrete ways to love God.

The second tablet of the law summed up loving your neighbor as yourself, and is broken down into six commandments, which we will explain later.

The Lord Jesus gives us some directives concerning the commandments. This, of course, applies to a person who has received Jesus Christ as Lord and savior and saved by faith in Jesus Christ (on the basis of what God has done for us in His love).

In verse 15, Jesus said: *"If you love me, you will obey what I command."* If you love me, you'll do what I say. (John 14:15)

We are saved through Jesus, and because we love God and are thankful to Him, we do what He says to do. *"Whoever has my commands and obeys them, he is the one who really loves me. He who loves me will be loved by my father and I too will love him and show myself to him."* (John 14:21) Jesus continued: *"If anyone loves me, he will obey my teachings (or commandments). My father will love him and we will come to him and make our home with him. He who does not love me, will not obey my teaching or my commandments. These words which you hear are not my*

own. They belong to the Father who sent me." (John 14:23)

LAW AND GOSPEL
Proper Use
Chapter 3

Have you been in a situation where you wanted to sin, but found you couldn't because it you knew it wasn't right? This kind of thing arises in our lives for there are standards God has set for us. Really, there is great security in knowing exactly what is right and wrong. God has set standards for us because He cares for us. His love is great toward us. In His love, He gave us His law so that we could know His will is.

It is one thing to do something because we are told to do it. It is another to do it because we love the one who gave us the commandment, and we count it a privilege. God's free gift is salvation in Jesus Christ. He loves us so much that He gave Himself for us. Now, in turn, since we are saved, since we are the children of God through Jesus Christ, we want to obey the commandments of God because we love Him and are thankful for all that He has done.

Has the law of God been done away with? One must look at the whole word of God for the answer. A principle that is true at the start should be true at the finish as well. Romans 6:15 tells us, "*What then? Shall we sin because we are not under law but under grace? By no means!*" This verse is often misused to tell people we are not under the law.

However, as earlier noted, not to be under the law means that we are freed from it. It means that we are set free in Jesus Christ. The law showed us our sin. God has saved us from our sin through Jesus Christ because He paid the penalty for our sins, and we are not enslaved or in bondage to the law any longer. We are free in Jesus. It isn't a freedom, as the scripture says, to go out and sin some more. "By no means," Paul said.

The law is for troublemakers, for people who are violating the commandments of God. It shows them their sin and drives them to Jesus Christ as Savior.

Another verse that is often misused is Galatians 5:18. People take it out of

context and build a little doctrine around it. It says: *"But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under the law."* People need to understand what it means to be led by the Spirit. We will explain that in great length in a later chapter, and gain understanding of that verse.

It is true that if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under the law, but what does it mean to be under the law? God said in Psalm 1 that as we meditate day and night in his law, we will be like a tree planted in the living waters. Our leaves won't wither and curl up, and our fruit won't going to fall off before its time. Everything we set our hand to will prosper.

The Lord also says the same things about His law in Joshua 1:6-9. If we don't let His law depart from our eyes, but we meditate on it (think on it) and do what it says, we will have great success. We will prosper in every way. The word of God tells us about God's law in the book of Psalms. David had a lot to say about the law of God and about its benefits. *"The law of the Lord is perfect, reviving the soul. The statutes of the Lord are trustworthy, making wise the simple."* (Psalm 19:7) In other words, the law of the Lord is perfect, holy, and will revive our souls. As a person does what God says, God brings His blessing, His refreshing, His abundant life to that person.

The Lord tells us something else about His law: *"Do good to your servant according to your word, O Lord. Teach me knowledge and good judgment, for I believe in your commands."* (Psalm 119:65) Faith in God's command will bring His abundant life. He says he loves the commandments of God. He delights in the law of the Lord.

As we go through the word of God, we find so many blessings that God has for us. We receive instruction, and that is what this book is all about. We learn how to receive instruction concerning the law of God, concerning the gospel (the good news of Jesus), concerning how the two relate. *"Where there is no revelation, the people cast off restraint; but blessed is he who keeps the law."* (Proverbs 29:18)

The spirit of lawlessness that is flowing in this world proves that *"where there is no revelation, the people cast off restraint."* Where there is no commandment which gives direction, the people will do whatever they want to do. That brings cursing... and big problems. Just think of a society where everyone is a law unto themselves,

doing whatever they feel like doing, whenever they feel like doing it. What tremendous chaos we would have.

God has given His law and His commandments, principles, statutes and judgments so that we might have order, so that we might have God's greatest blessing. If there is anyone who knows how to give blessing and how to lead a person into blessing, it certainly is the Lord. He has given His commandments so that we might have His blessing. The people who don't want to obey God don't really love Him. They would rather go their own way, and as a result, they will follow the devil instead of God's commandments. Jesus said, *"If you love me, you keep my commandments."* Jesus said, *"Do not think that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I have not come to abolish them but to fulfill them."* (Matthew 5:17) People who think the law has been done away with, need to look closely at this portion of Jesus' commandments.

In the fulfillment of the commandments of God is the blessing of God. Jesus gave His life so that we might have His life, so that we might do what He did, so that we might follow His example, and be the children of the heavenly father. Jesus didn't abolish the law or do away with it. He came to fulfill it.

"I tell you the truth, until heaven and earth disappear, not the smallest letter, nor the least stroke of a pen, will by any means disappear from the Law until everything is accomplished." (Matthew 5:18) Friends, I don't see the heavens and the earth disappearing. I see earthquakes, famines, and pestilence – all the signs of the last days, but yet heaven and earth have not disappeared. It will when Jesus returns, but not yet.

"Anyone who breaks one of the least of these commandments and teaches others to do the same will be called least in the kingdom of heaven, but whoever practices and teaches these commands will be called great in the kingdom of heaven. For I tell you that unless your righteousness surpasses that of the Pharisees and the teachers of the law, you will certainly not enter the kingdom or heaven." (Matthew 5:19-20) The only way to have right standing with God is through Jesus Christ. He makes us righteous in God's sight. To be righteous is to be in right standing with the Lord. A person who has been made righteous in Jesus Christ must act like it. We must obey the commandments of God, and we must live righteously.

The Pharisees and the teachers of the law were not righteous because they did not obey the law. We cannot say we are righteous and not keep the law of God. Scripture says that anyone who breaks one of the least of these commandments and teaches others to do the same will be called least in the kingdom of heaven.

The person who teaches and does the commandments of God will be considered great in the kingdom of heaven. A person who violates the commandments of God can still be in the kingdom of heaven, but he will be considered least. We are not referring to people who willfully, knowingly, rebelliously disobey God, but those who violate a commandment of God out of ignorance or those who repent. They will have the life of God because they stay in a state of fellowship with God.

The constant desire of a person who loves God is to do what He says. Paul says, *"...I delight in the law of God after the inward man."* (Romans 7:22) In other words, a person's spirit who loves God, also loves to keep the commandments of God.

The Lord says something else about His law: *"So in everything, do to others what you would have them do to you, for this sums up the Law and the Prophets."* (Matthew 7:12) It is the Golden Rule. It is the law of love. God, in His love, has given us principles or commandments. As we follow them, God is blessed, we are blessed, and everyone else around us is blessed.

Jesus told us something else about God's law. He had just silenced the Sadducees and the Pharisees, the experts of the law. One of them had come to Him and tested Him with this question: *"Teacher, which is the greatest commandment in the law?"* Jesus replied, *'Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind. This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it. Love your neighbor as yourself. All the law and the prophets hang on these two commandments.'*

Note that Jesus didn't create any new commandment. He simply quoted from Deuteronomy 6:5 and Leviticus 19:18. The Christians who think Jesus did away with the law need to look again. Jesus reiterated the law in this passage of scripture but summarizing the two tables of the law. The first one, about loving the Lord your God, is quoted from Deuteronomy 6:5, and the second one concerning loving your neighbor is quoted out of Leviticus 19:18.

The Lord tells us more about His law and how He looks at it through Paul says: *"Now we know that whatever the law says, it says to those who are under the law, so that every mouth may be silenced and the whole world held accountable to God. Therefore no one will be declared righteous in his sight by observing the law; rather through the law we become conscious of sin."* (Romans 3:19) This is one of the functions of law, as we have stated before.

Those who are under the law are in bondage to it, and are accountable to God. They are in a state of separation from God. The law confirms that, and declares them guilty. The end product is they need to go to Jesus Christ for salvation and life. If a Christian who loves God and is saved in Jesus goes out and disobeys Him, God has made a provision for forgiveness. The law condemns you when you are out of line with God. You're out of fellowship with Him. Claim 1st John 1:9 as you ask God's forgiveness because He said He is faithful and just to forgive and to cleanse those who acknowledge their sin to Him.

The law still works in the Christian's life who steps out of God's will and out of His commandments by disobeying Him and wanting his own way, doing his own thing. The law of God works at that point to drive him back to the Lord Jesus Christ for forgiveness. I thank God every day that He is faithful to forgive you and me who come back to Him and say, "Lord, I've sinned. Forgive me. Cleanse me from all unrighteousness. Give me back the joy of my salvation." God forgives, He cleanses, and He removes all guilt. That is His promise.

Take note, however, that nobody is declared righteous in the sight of the Lord by keeping the law of God. We are declared righteous because of the blood of Jesus. When we admit we are wrong, the blood of Jesus covers us and God makes us righteous in His sight again. It is a wonderful promise of God.

We find something else that is spoken concerning the law. *"So then, the law is holy, and the commandment is holy, righteous and good."* (Romans 7:12) Nobody can ever say the law of God is not holy, eternal, righteous and good. God gives only good and perfect gifts. What comes down from the Father of lights is only good and perfect. (James 1) God did not give us the law to create problems in our lives. He gave it to show us what is right and wrong in His sight, to show us what His holy standards are. Corruption has occurred because of man's disobedience to God,

because of man's weakness. The law of God is itself good, holy, righteous, just, and eternal.

As we keep the law of God, we receive the blessing of God. Then our approach to authority, to the law of the land, and to the laws of God begin to be seen in a different light. We see that a person who is keeping the law does not have to be afraid of it or of the authorities.

"We know that the law is spiritual; but I am unspiritual, sold as a slave to sin." (Romans 7:14) The law of God is good, and it is spiritual. The person who violates the commandments or law of God is acting in an unspiritual manner. In this state, one cannot receive the blessing that comes with walking in the Spirit. We can now understand what Paul was really talking about when he said that if one walks after the Spirit, one is not under the law. (Galatians 5:18) If we are walking after the Spirit, we keep the commandments and we are not in bondage to the law because we are not in a state of sin.

Those who walk in the will of God, live after the Spirit, and they fulfill the law. They do what God says to do, and as a result, the blessing of God is theirs. They are not under any condemnation; they are not guilty, because they are not violating the commandments. For example when you drive at the speed limit on the freeway, you have no fear a highway patrolman coming down the road after you. You have no fear because you know you are keeping the law. You are not under the law at that point. You are keeping it, so you are not in bondage to it. You don't have to be afraid of the consequences or punishment that comes with violating the law.

Jesus was made a curse for us so that we might know His blessing. This is a tremendously important principle of God. The law is spiritual and good. It is good to those who keep it, and it is good to those who don't keep it because it shows them what is really right with God. The devil would have people believe the law of God is not good. After all, nobody can keep it. However, every one of God's laws, as seen in the Ten Commandments (Exodus 20), was written for our good. As people follow them, the blessing of God will be theirs.

Paul said, *"For in my inner being I delight in God's law."* In my inner being, in my spirit man, I delight in God's law. The person who loves God delights in

obeying Him, in following His commandments. There is a difference between the commandments of God written by God's own finger, that is, the Ten Commandments (Exodus 20), and all the ordinances, rituals and rites that are recorded in the Law of Moses.

This is the difference Paul refers to in Galatians when he speaks of circumcision. He is not talking about the Ten Commandments. He is talking about circumcision which was one of the rites or rituals that was practiced. They served a purpose for a reason. They were a shadow of what is fulfilled in Christ Jesus. However, the commandments of God, the Ten Commandments, are eternal. They are holy, they are good. All believers of the major Christian faiths know the commandments of God have *not* been done away with. They are our guideline for holiness.

Some people say that in Jesus all that is expected of us is that we love God and one another, but there is more to love than that. Many people don't know what love is. I thank God for 2nd John 6: “...*this is love: that we walk in obedience to His commands.*” Love is walking in obedience to the commands of God. “*As you have heard from the beginning his command is that you walk in love.*”

LAW AND THE GOSPEL
Relationship
Chapter 4

The word of God tells us through Paul: *"But as for you, continue in what you have learned and have become convinced of, because you know those from whom you learned it, and how from infancy you have known the holy Scriptures, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus. All scripture is God breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work."* (2nd Timothy 3:14-17)

Paul exhorted Timothy about the importance of living like who we are. If there be any in Christ, they are a new creation, (2nd Corinthians 5:17) all the old is passed away, and God is making everything new. As you look at your life, see if there are still some old things hanging on. God is concerned about holiness, and there is a relationship with the law of God in our lives. How does the law of God relate to our righteousness?

The question has often been asked: "If I'm a child of God and I'm saved through faith in Jesus Christ, not by works lest any man should boast, why am I still under the law?" Nevertheless, if you are led by the Spirit you are not under the law. (Galatians 5:18) People mistakenly believe they are not under the law of God anymore.

There is a great need for God's people to understand His principles. We need to study to show ourselves workmen approved under God, rightly dividing the word of truth, that we need not be ashamed. Many people will be ashamed when they stand before God because they didn't understand the word of God the way they should have. We need to pray, "Lord, let your Holy Spirit direct the understanding of your word so that things might fall together, so that we might get understanding and answers." In this book, the Lord is giving instruction concerning the law of God, the gospel of God, and holiness.

As we gain knowledge, we will understand how the principles work, and we can

communicate to others so they might understand what it means to be holy in Jesus.

Where salvation is concerned, you can boldly say the law of God has been done away with. The law of God could not save you because of the weakness of your own flesh or desires. Everything that you would do would be opposed to the law of God; even the good things were not good in God's sight.

Romans 3 tells us that all have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God. There is none that doeth good, no not one. But thanks be to God who has given us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ, the wages of sin which are death, aren't ours anymore. God in His love for us gave us His free gift. Therefore we are not under the law concerning salvation. It is God's free gift to us.

"For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith – and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God – not by works, so that no one can boast." (Ephesians 2:8-9) In other words, our salvation does no rest on our keeping the law of God. Our salvation rests upon our faith in Jesus Christ, and even that faith, God gave us. We didn't earn it, and we didn't deserve it. We simply heard the fact that the law of God says that all have sinned and fallen short. We had to say, "Jesus, I need you. I need that blood that was shed for me! I need to be at peace with God in my life." When you received the blood of Jesus given for you on the cross so that you might be right with God, that promise of God and His life came to you.

We are not saved by the law. In that respect, we don't need the law. We need Jesus. *"Where then is boasting? It is excluded. On what principle? On that of observing the law? No, but on that of faith. For we maintain that a man is justified by faith apart from observing the law."* (Romans 3:27-28) In other words, we are declared not guilty by faith in Jesus Christ because of what God has done for us.

"Is God the God of the Jews only? Is He not the God of the Gentiles too? Yes, of Gentiles too, since there is only one God, who will justify the circumcised by faith and the uncircumcised through that same faith." (Romans 3:29-30) Everyone at some point or another will have to have faith in Jesus Christ as Lord to be saved, whether Jew or Gentile. It goes on, *"Do we, then, nullify the law by this faith? Not at all! Rather, we uphold the law."* (Romans 3:31) The law of God has done its purpose. It drove us to Jesus Christ, and He gave us salvation. Now, because we love God, we want to keep His commandments.

Salvation is not based on observance of the Law. Salvation is based upon what Jesus, in God's love, has done for us at the cross. *"For God so loved the world that He gave His one and only Son, that whosoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life."* (John 3:16) Jesus didn't come into the world to condemn the world. He came to save the world, to give the life of God. If the law could save a person, Jesus would not have had to come. But the law couldn't save anyone, so Jesus came and fulfilled the law, giving us His right standing with God. Then, we in turn, because we love God, want to keep His commandments.

As far as holiness is concerned, is the law done away with? The answer is no. Holiness needs standards. The law of God is holy, it is just, and it is good. Some things concerning holiness are found in 1st John 3. This applies to all of God's children. Many people say they are the righteousness of God in Christ, they are made Christians through Jesus, but they disobey God's commandments. They live how they want to live.

What is the law's place in a person who loves God's life? *"How great is the love the Father has lavished on us, that we should be called children of God! And that is what we are! The reason the world does not know us is that it did not know him (Jesus). Dear friends, now we are children of God, and what we will be has not yet been made known. But we know that when he [Jesus] appears, we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is. Everyone who has this hope in himself purifies himself, just as he is pure."* (1st John 3:1-3)

Because we have this hope in Jesus, we will purify ourselves; we will get ourselves ready for God's return. Just as Jesus is pure, if we hope in Him, then we will seek purity to make sure our lives line up with His.

"Everyone who sins breaks the law; in fact, sin is lawlessness." (1st John 3:4) I get a little concerned when people say we are not under the law, and don't have to keep the commandments any more. I get concerned because they haven't rightly divided the word of truth, nor rightly understood the word of God. If sin was done away with in Jesus, and the power of sin was done away with in Jesus, why is it that people still sin? It is not God's fault, nor is it Jesus' fault that Christians still sin. It is because Christians decide they want to do things their own way, still not recognizing that the blood of Jesus was given for them, not recognizing the

importance of holiness in a person's life. That is not the way God would have it.

We are "*...bought with a price (the precious blood of Jesus): Therefore glorify God with your body and in your spirit which are God's.*" (1st Corinthians 6:20) Our lives are not our own. We belong to God. This is why Peter, James, John, and Jesus, who were all talking to Christians, say not to sin. If the law was done away with, why do all these people talk about sin? "*Everyone who sins breaks the law. In fact, sin is lawlessness.*" (1st John 3:4) If I would not sin anymore, I wouldn't have to deal with the law. Sin is the transgression of the law.

"But you know that he appeared so that he might take away our sins. And in him is no sin. No one who lives in him keeps on sinning." (1st John 3:5, 6) This is talking about deliberately, willfully, knowingly continuing to practice sin. "*No one who continues to sin has either seen him or known him.*" (1st John 3:6) You can't say you love God and deliberately and knowingly continue to go against Him. The law of God is here to cause us to come back to Jesus for forgiveness, to come back to the blood of Jesus so that we might have life with God abundantly.

"Dear children, do not let anyone lead you astray." (1st John 3:7) Many people are being led astray nowadays as well as in Paul's time. They're saying they are free in Jesus so they can go out and live any way they want to, and it will be all right with God. Friends, do not be deceived, do not be led astray. "*He who does what is right is righteous, just as he [Jesus] is righteous.*" (1st John 3:7) If we are not living righteously then we should really take a serious look at our commitment to God.

"He who does what is sinful is of the devil, because the devil has been sinning from the beginning." (verse 8) The reason the Son of God appeared was to destroy the devil's work, namely, the power of sin on a person's life. Jesus broke the power of sin. Water baptized was the outward sign of what happened in our hearts. The old us that did not love God drowns, dies, is buried with Jesus. As Jesus was raised from the dead to a new life, when we come out of that water, we are raised to a new life in God.

The day that you confessed with your mouth, "Lord, forgive me. I am a sinner, I am separated from you. Jesus Christ, come into my heart and be my Lord, my Savior," the power of God went into your life. The power of godliness went into your life to transform you from a person under the power of the devil, to a person

who was born of the living God with all the rights and privileges of a son or daughter. You became a transformed new being. The power of sin was broken. Everything that separated us from God was broken and rendered powerless, and we have the ability now to be holy even as God has made us holy.

That is what the blood of Jesus is all about. It is very important that we understand this. Jesus has made you and me holy because of His blood. That is what the gospel is all about. We are children of God, not children of the devil anymore. So live as children of God. How amazing that God has given us the ability to live as His sons and daughters now because He is in us.

"...the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God..." (Galatians 2:20). When I become aware of this, I do not want to sin any more. I do not want to violate the law any more. I want to live by the Holy Spirit of God, and as I do, I am not under the law. The law is not holding me in bondage any more because I am observing the law. As I walk by the Spirit, I keep God's commandments. I walk in holiness. No one who is born of God will continue to sin, because His seed remains in him. He cannot go on sinning because he has been born of God.

If you do not feel a quickening in your heart, and do not feel rotten when you violate the commandments of God, there is a problem with your conscience. Maybe you need to look closely at the love of God and what He has done for you in His mercy. *"To whom much has been forgiven, the same loves much."*

What is love? It is keeping the commandments of God. (2nd John 6) I cannot stand myself if I lie or cheat, or hurt a brother or sister. I cannot stand myself until I ask for God's forgiveness and their forgiveness. That is how it works. As a child of God, I cannot continue to willfully, knowingly, deliberately go against the commandments of God. This is how we know who are the children of God, and who are the children of the devil.

Although the law cannot save people, in my daily walk with God, as a child of God, the law has a very dominant place because it shows me what love is, and how I love God. It shows me love concerning my neighbor, and how I can love my neighbor as myself. There is a relationship of faith in works, and how a person can't just say they have faith if there is no fruit or works. (James 2:14-26) Works that

proceed from saving faith are saving works or righteous works. They show you are a child of God because you do what God says to do.

The Lord said He did not come to abolish the law. (Matthew 5:17-20) The law of God is the guideline for a Christian's life in what is pleasing to God and what is not pleasing to Him. It helps us stay on the straight and narrow, and gives direction.

The commandments of God are not grievous. *"This is love for God: to obey His commands. And His commands are not burdensome."* (1st John 5:3) When people say they are not under the law, or under that burden, they don't understand the word of God. They don't understand how the law and the gospel work together. They don't understand what Paul is talking about in Romans 7 when he says, *"I delight in the law of God after my inner man."*

These people don't understand that it is a privilege to love God. We show Him our love by doing what He says. They don't understand that blessing comes with obedience. People quote Deuteronomy 28, *"You will be blessed in the city and blessed in the country, blessed when you come in and blessed when you go out"* [as they keep the law of God]. They look at all the wonderful blessings that come, that God will cause our goods to multiply, He will cause us to have health and every blessing as we do what He says. When it comes to certain other commandments of God, these same people say they "are not under the law." Friends, you cannot pick and choose. God does the picking and choosing.

There are people who are not willing to take responsibility for their actions or decisions. They "want to have their cake and eat it too." People say they love Jesus, but when it gets right down to it, they do not want to obey His commandments. Examine your own life right now. Are there areas of your life where you would like the blessing, but you are not willing to do what God says to do? These are areas of responsibility.

With the law is God's holy commitment to us, about responsibility. The Old Covenant was based on: "You do this, and I will do that." God said, "You are my people, and I am your God, so you do this, and I will do this for you."

You will find the same principles at work in the New Testament. God says, "I am your God, and you are my people. I love you. I have made a commitment of

myself to you. I recognize that you could not keep the law, so I prepared a body for myself, and came for you that you might have life, and have it abundantly. I make you righteous, so live righteously. Be therefore perfect even as your Father is perfect."

This is the same God who makes the New Testament and the New Covenant. In the Old Testament, it was an eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth. But in Matthew, chapter 5 the Lord tells us He has given us a new commandment. He tells us to pray for our enemies, *"Love your enemies and pray for those who spitefully use you and persecute you, that you may be sons of your Father in heaven."* *"And sendeth rain to fall on the just and on the unjust."* *"Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect."*

We are called to holiness, without which nobody will see the Lord. God made us holy, and now He tells us to live holy. He tells us to give up sexual immorality, greed and idolatry, or putting other things before the Lord. God says, "Be holy for you are bought with a price. Therefore serve God with your spirit and your body which belong to the Lord."

Before this can happen in people's lives, they have to understand the good news of Jesus. They have to understand the blood covenant of God with His people. They have to understand that they cannot willfully, knowingly continue to practice sin after having knowledge of the truth. Hebrews 10:26 talks about holiness, and we must gain an awareness of the working of God so that we can express it in our lives, and live like God would have His people live.

As we noted in 1st John 3, you can't just say, "I'm right with God because of Jesus," and live a life that is contrary. It just doesn't work. Many people will stand before Jesus and hear *"Not everyone who says to me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter into the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of my Father who is in heaven."* (Matthew 7:_) That is where the blessing is. We take the word of God, knowing His word is true and receive it as instruction. Receive the correction it brings. Receive the rebuke. Receive the understanding, the life Jesus says that His words are spirit and they are life. They will cause us to see the error of our ways, and turn from, it knowing that we have a loving God who cares for us. He loves you, and accepts you because of what He has done for you. So receive His love. That is what obedience to God's commandments are all about. It is simply receiving the love of

God. And that is why they are not a burden to us.

It is a joy to love God. It is a joy to love our neighbor. It is a joy to delight in the Word that God has given us which will never change. As long as we follow it, we can expect God's blessing will rest upon us. And we will be blessed going in, and blessed going out.

LAW AND GOSPEL
Faith and Commandments
Chapter 5

There is nothing finer than having faith in God and obeying Him. I know the blessing of God in my life, and I know what a blessing can come to you too. You may already be experiencing His blessing that comes with faith and obedience to His word. Love is all about keeping God's commandments and honoring Him.

I asked the Lord, "What's the relationship between faith and obedience? What is the relationship between faith and keeping the commandments of God?" Is there a relationship between faith and keeping the commandments of God? I believe to this point in the study that you know there is. Faith without works is dead.

I will share with you some scriptures which the Lord gave me. Here is the relationship between faith and the keeping of the commandments of God: *"Where, then is boasting? It is excluded. On what principle? On that of observing the law? No, but on that of faith. For we maintain that a man is justified by faith apart from observing the law. Is God the God of Jews only? Is He not the God of Gentiles too? Yes, of Gentiles too, since there's only one God who will justify the circumcised by faith and the uncircumcised through that same faith."* (Romans 3:27-31)

In other words, faith in Jesus is what saves a person. It is what declares a person not guilty before God. The scripture goes on to say, *"Do we, then, nullify the law by this faith? Not at all! Rather, we uphold the law."* Faith in Jesus doesn't do away with the law of God. It is upheld by faith in Jesus. God actually establishes His law through Jesus Christ, and He establishes it as holy and eternal. As we do what God says, because of our faith in Jesus, the blessing of God will rest upon us.

The Lord also gave me Revelation 12:17. I was concerned about the relationship between faith and the commandments of God because a lot of people say, "I have faith in Jesus so I'm free from the commandments of God." That never struck me right even as a young boy. I was taught to honor the Lord and His commandments, and I knew that was what really counted. Revelation 12 tells us

who the real Christians are. *"Then the dragon was enraged at the woman."* (This is symbolic: the dragon representing Satan, the woman representing the church.) *"And they went off to make war against the rest of her offspring."* Who are the offspring? Who make up the church of God? *"Those who obey God's commandments and hold to the testimony of Jesus."* (Revelations 12:_) They are the ones who are God's children, the true children.

Here is another verse that shows the relationship of faith and obedience to the commandments of God. *"A third angel followed them and said in a loud voice: 'If anyone worships the beast in his image and receives his mark on the forehead or on the hand, he, too, will drink of the wine of God's fury, which has been poured full strength into the cup of his wrath. He will be tormented with burning sulfur in the presence of the holy angels and of the Lamb. And the smoke of their torment rises forever and ever. There is no rest day or night for those who worship the beast and his image, or for anyone who receives the mark of his name.'"* (Revelation 14:9-12)

The time is coming when the beast and the mark of the beast will be here, and we will find that those who permit that mark to be upon them will end up with the devil forever, tormented in the lake which burns with fire and brimstone. These are the people who continue to forsake God's law, His grace and His mercy, His gospel, and the good news of Jesus. Those who reject Jesus will end up forever apart from God. That is what the second death is. Eternal separation from the Lord. The torment of being eternally separated from God and His blessing forever.

During this time there will be a need for patient endurance on the part of the saints. (Revelation 14:12) We are those saints, the people of God who obey His commandments and remain faithful to Jesus. You can see the relationship between faith and obedience.

Something else that pertains to the relationship between faith and obedience. (Many people will be deceived in the last days, thinking they are children of God when they're not.) *"Likewise every good tree bears good fruit, but a bad tree bears bad fruit. A good tree cannot bear bad fruit, and a bad tree cannot bear good fruit. Every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire. Thus by their fruit you will recognize them."* (Matthew 7:17-26)

"Not everyone who says to me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven, but only he who does the will of my Father who is in heaven." (Matthew 7:21) Only those who do the will of the Father will have life with God. You can say, "Jesus Christ is Lord" all you want, but if you don't live like He is your Lord, then He is not your Lord. If you don't follow His word, He can't be your Lord. You can't be blessed. Many people in the last days will be deceived. They say with their mouths that Jesus is Lord, but their hearts are far from Him.

You can tell real Christians by their desire to seek God's will. Everyone falls short from time to time, but the true Christian asks forgiveness, takes the commandments of God and seeks to follow them. That is because God is in their hearts. *"Many will say to me on that day, 'Lord, Lord did we not prophesy in your name, and in your name drive out demons and perform many miracles?' "* Some say these people are not really Christians. Friends, these people knew God. The only way you can cast out devils, truly prophesy in the name of the Lord, and perform many miracles in the name of the Lord is to know the Lord. But what happened? These people's lives went apart from God.

"Then I will tell them plainly, 'I never knew you. Away from me, you evil doers!' Therefore everyone who hears these words of mine and puts them into practice is like a wise man who built his house on the rock. But everyone who hears these words of mine and does not put them into practice is like a foolish man who built his house on the sand. The rain came down, the streams rose, and the winds blew and beat against the house, and it fell with a great crash. When Jesus had finished saying these things, the crowds were amazed at His teaching, because he taught as one who had authority, and not as their teachers of the law." (Matthew 7:23-29)

It is one thing to teach the law of God. It is another to do the law of God. The person who teaches and obeys the law of God has the authority of God standing behind him. God's blessing rests on him. When you listen to what he says, and follow his instructions, you will get results in your life because that is the way God promised it. Faith and obedience go hand in hand.

What does it mean not to be under the law? In Galatians 5:18, we read: *"If you are led by the Spirit, you are not under the law."* It is evident that the law of God has a place in God's people's lives, but not to be under it means we are not subject to

it. *"...therefore there is now no condemnation for them which are in Christ Jesus who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit."* (Romans 8:1)

As we have noted, the law condemns a person. It says no one can stand before God, holy on their own, without Jesus. The law says you need Him. God's Word tells us there is now no condemnation for them who are in Christ Jesus, for them who walk after the Spirit and not after the flesh. Galatians 5:18 says, *"If you are led by the Spirit, you are not under the law."* Why not? If you walk after the Spirit, you fulfill the law of God. You do what He says so there is no condemnation upon your life.

It would be unjust of God to condemn us if we are obedient to Him. That is why, if we live after the Spirit, because of the power of God working in our lives in Jesus Christ, we are not under the law. On the other hand, the person who does not walk after Jesus Christ in the Spirit, and goes his own way apart from God, comes under condemnation and the law condemns him. The law says he is guilty.

Through Jesus Christ, the law of the Spirit of life set me free from the law of sin and death. In other words, the day Jesus Christ came into my heart to be my Lord and Savior, the law that worked within me (the law of sin and death) had no power any longer, and the effect of it was removed from me. The power of it was removed from me, and I was set free to love God and to become His child. I was set free to live in a way that is pleasing to the Lord. Jesus brought the law of the Spirit of life, and it set me free from the law of sin and death.

The wages of sin is death. The wages and consequences (the punishment) is death for the person who violates the commandments of God, who violates the law of God. This means death physically and eternally. However, Jesus brings a new life and a new order. That is what it means to walk after the Spirit. We are not under the old law. God brings a new law, the law of Jesus, the law of the Spirit of God, the law of life, where we are able to keep His commandments.

"For what the law was powerless to do in that it was weakened by the sinful nature, God did by sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful man to be a sin offering." (Romans 8:3) The law was powerless to save us, and that is why we know we are saved through the grace of God, by faith in Jesus. It is God's gift, and it brought power to give us a brand new life. Nobody could make themselves good

in God's sight. That power of the new life, the power of Godliness, came through faith in Jesus Christ and what He did for us.

The law is good, holy, true, just and eternal, but man's sinful nature weakened its power. We could not be saved by the power of the law because we could not keep the law. If we could keep it perfectly, nobody would have needed Jesus to come. But, as we know, breaking one commandment breaks all the commandments, and *"the wages of sin is death."* Therefore, through Jesus, God has given forgiveness, mercy, and the ability to walk holy in His sight. That is what Romans 8 is all about.

We can have a victorious life in the Spirit of God. He condemned sin in sinful man in order that the righteous requirements of the law might be fully met in us. The requirements of the law are righteous. They could not be fulfilled within us, but Jesus fulfilled the law. (Matthew 5) It says He didn't come to abolish the law but to fulfill it. As Jesus fulfilled the law in our place, he kept the commandments holy. He was the perfect sacrifice. When we receive Jesus as Lord and Savior into our lives, God now sees us through Jesus' blood.

The blood of Jesus makes us righteous, in right standing with God, justified, declared not guilty before Him. Now God imparts Himself, His own ability to us. Therefore, like Jesus fulfilled the law, in the same way we too, as we walk in the Spirit, fulfill the law of God. We do what God says, and that is why we are not under the law, nor under condemnation. We are not under the curse of the law anymore, but we are free in Jesus to experience blessing.

"He condemned sin in sinful man in order that the righteous requirements of the law might be fully met in us." (Romans 8:3-4) In us. Not in Himself. But in us, who do not live according to the sinful nature but according to the spirit.

The Holy Spirit of God, Jesus, the Father God, are behind the commandments of God. As we do what He tells us, the blessing of God rests upon us. This is the beauty of the gospel. God, in His love, sent Jesus to fulfill the law in our place, to take away our guilt, to take away our separation. God gave us peace with Himself, and then He gave us the ability to obey the law wherein the blessing of God will then come to us through Jesus Christ.

"Those who live according to the sinful nature have their minds set on what that

nature desires." (Romans 8:5) What is the sinful nature? It lusts after its own wants, own needs and desires; it lusts after what somebody else has (jealousy, envy), strife, anger, bitterness and hostility. These are all things of the sinful nature. God's Word says those things have been crucified at the cross for us through Jesus Christ. We don't have to live that way any longer. We are free to live for God now, free to walk after the Spirit, free to keep the commandments of God and receive the blessings He has for us.

The carnal mind thinks we can be Christians and yet live in adultery, drinking, doing drugs, or be homosexuals and lesbians. However, God's Word tells us that none of this has a place in the kingdom of God. You cannot be in the Spirit, walking after God's ways, and be involved in perversion, lying, cheating, slandering, being lazy, or stealing. This is not God's way. It never has been, and never will be.

The person who is living after the sinful nature has his mind set on what his nature desires. Those who live in accordance with the Spirit have their minds set on what the Spirit desires. *"Since, then, you have been raised with Christ, set your hearts on the things above, where Christ is seated at the right hand of God. Set your minds on the things above, not on earthly things."* (Colossians 3:1-2)

Many people are still striving for worldly possessions. There is nothing wrong with having nice things unless you are controlled by them. Then there is a problem. We should be controlled by the Spirit of God. The people who live after the Spirit and seek to do God's will have their minds set on what the Spirit of God in them desires; namely, glorifying God through their lives in what they say, do, and think.

"The mind of the sinful man is death but the mind controlled by the Spirit is life and peace." (Romans 8:6) The sinful mind is hostile to God. It doesn't want to be under His control. This is why even a lot of Christians say, "I don't want to be under the law of God," or "I'm not under the law of God. I'm in Jesus Christ. Jesus is my Lord." They are really boastful about it, and proud of it, but they don't even have the slightest understanding about what it means to have Jesus Christ as Lord.

Jesus said, *"If you love me, you keep my commandments."* When people say Jesus Christ is Lord, that means He has the right to run their lives His way. That means blessing, peace, and life according to the word of God. But the sinful mind is hostile to God because it does not submit to His law, or can it do so. It doesn't have

the ability to, nor does it want to. That person (and it may even be a Christian who is not living like he should) has big problems. They can't have the blessing of God, and that grieves the Holy Spirit of God immensely. It may even grieve their spirit. This puts a person in a position of compromise.

Jesus said he would prefer that a person was hot or cold, but the lukewarm ones He will spit out of His mouth. Those aren't very fine words to hear, but maybe if you are in a place of compromise and lukewarmness, take heed. It could be the finest thing that could be said. *"Open rebuke is better than secret love."* (Proverbs 10:1) What good is it to love somebody if you watch them go right off the cliff and die? None at all. It is a horrible waste. God doesn't want to see anyone that He loves wasted and settling for less than His greatest blessing in Jesus Christ.

Those controlled by the sinful nature cannot please God. If you have come to Jesus, you know He is Lord and Savior, and you can't be controlled by the sinful nature any more. Jesus has set you free from it. You have to set yourself free now. You set yourself free by understanding that God has already set you free. As you recognize the importance of all that the blood of Jesus means to you and what He has done for you, you are thankful to the Lord, rejoicing in Him. You don't want to go back to your old ways, and you know you don't have to. You don't have to because you're free. Jesus has set you free.

We have to do something with our minds. We must set our minds, which is the area of the will, on doing God's will, and not our own. The old person or the old self who didn't love God did what it wanted to do. The will was set on satisfying and pleasing, pleasure-seeking to its will. Now that we are free in Jesus, we want to do the will of God. How wonderful that God has given us the ability to do His will. That is why we are not under the law anymore, and I thank God for it. We are not under the law because we will keep the commandments of God as we walk in the Spirit of God. It just comes naturally in the Spirit.

We love God. We delight in the law of God after our inner man. Paul said, *"You, however, are controlled not by the sinful nature but by the Spirit, if the Spirit of God lives in you. And if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he does not belong to Christ. But if Christ is in you, your body is dead because of sin, yet your spirit is alive because of righteousness. And if the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead is living in you, he who raised Christ from the dead will also give life*

to your mortal bodies through his Spirit, who lives in you." (Romans 8:9-11)

We have an obligation to go on and live after the Spirit, to keep the commandments of God because Jesus Christ loves you and has set you free. I am free, indeed; you are free indeed. We are free to do what God says, and it is a privilege and a joy. We are not under the law as we walk in the Spirit and do what God says.

LAW AND GOSPEL
Love Motivates
Chapter 6

I believe that as we seek the Lord together, God's blessing will flow more and more in these last days. We will see God's grace poured out as the wickedness and lawlessness increase around us. God's people will rejoice and be glad because God's presence will grow stronger every day.

If you have confessed with your mouth that Jesus Christ is your Lord, and you believe in your heart that He arose from the dead, you are saved, and you rest confident in that fact. That is God's promise. If you are not sure that you have the life of God and that you are saved, I want you to know that your works will not save you. It is your faith in Jesus Christ.

Many times people do works for God out of fear that they may not be saved. They read their Bible, quickly pray, quickly go and witness to someone, and by all means, pay their tithes and offerings. They feel this is all part of being saved, which it is, but those few extra dollars in the offering plate will not give them any favor with God. It isn't how much you do or give that saves you. It is faith in Jesus Christ that saves you. It is His gift.

If you have asked Jesus into your heart to be your Lord and Savior, you rejoice because you're glad and confident that the good work that God has begun in your life, he is going to be faithful to complete and perfect in the days ahead. In the meantime, thank God for the privilege to work in faith. If you are saved, you want to love God and keep His commandments. You want to love your neighbor, and you want to do good things for people.

Wanting to be obedient to God because you love him is the motivation for doing good works. It isn't fear, but faith in God because you know that you are His child. The Bible tells us that to whom much has been forgiven, the same loves much. That is a desire of my heart. My prayer is that it is your desire also. Continue to love God. Continue to love others and do what God says, and you will enter into the new life with Him, not because of your works, but because you love Him. When you

love Him, these good things just come naturally. You want to help people. You want to praise the Lord. You want to worship God.

As a child of God, you are free from the bondage of the law. If you walk after the Spirit you will not fulfill the lusts of the flesh, and you are not under the law. (Galatians 5:18) As mentioned earlier, to be under the law is to be under the bondage of the law which means you are not walking right with God, and so the law condemns you. Condemnation is bondage. Guilt is bondage. It is a curse. Jesus has freed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us. In other words, He took our place, was separated from God, and He gave us His right position with God. We rejoice in that fact today.

“There is therefore now no condemnation to them who are in Christ Jesus who walk after the spirit and not after the flesh.” (Romans 8:1) If one's mind is set on carnal things and on the world, one's own fleshly desires, and not on the things of the Spirit, then you are under the law. That requires God's forgiveness to get that condemnation and guilt washed away. People who are controlled by the sinful nature actually are in a place where they cannot receive the blessing of God.

“The mind of a sinful man is death, but the mind controlled by the Spirit is life and peace. The sinful mind is hostile to God. It does not submit to God's law, nor can it do so.” (Romans 8:6-7) It is an awful state when God's people are in a position where they just do not want to be obedient to God. When we don't want to do something God says, we try to find an excuse for it. We may even take the word of God and try to use it as an excuse for not keeping the commandments. People will take a verse from one place in the scripture and try to match it with another one to condone their behavior. That is not permissible.

If you walk in the Spirit, you are not under the law because, as a child of God, you will fulfill the law. *“For what the law was powerless to do in that it was weakened by the sinful nature, God did by sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful man to be a sin offering. And so he condemned sin and sinful man, in order that the righteous requirements of the law might be fully met in us.”* (Romans 8:3) As we walk in the Spirit, we will fulfill the law just like Jesus did when He walked on this earth. Jesus walked in the Spirit. He was not under the law, and we also walk in the Spirit as we obey the commandments of God. As a result, we are not under the condemnation and the bondage of the law of God.

"Such confidence as this is ours through Christ before God." (2nd Corinthians 3:4) If you have Jesus in your heart as Lord and Savior, you can have great confidence towards God. You can come boldly before His throne because of the blood of Jesus, with sure confidence and full assurance of faith that God is with you and you are His. That is what gives you the drive and the desire to love the world like God does. That is how Paul was responding in this scripture: "Not that we are competent in ourselves to claim anything for ourselves, but our competence comes from God." (verse 5)

Our faith comes from God. Our competence, our understanding, our wisdom and power all come from God. All that we have comes from God. He has made us competent as ministers of a new covenant, not of the letter, but of the Spirit. *"For the letter kills but the spirit gives life."* It is important to know. God intended the law for our good to give us His criteria for holiness, and He, Himself, made that possible. We are holy because Jesus makes us holy. We are worthy because Jesus makes us worthy. It is Jesus who lives in us (Galatians 2:20).

We must understand the spirit of the law and the spirit of the gospel so that we can have God's blessing the way He intends it. The Spirit gives life. Jesus gives us salvation. Holiness comes through obedience to the commandments of God. It is Jesus doing these things through us. I do not have the ability on my own to keep the law of God. You don't, either. But by God's Spirit working within us, we have not only the ability to keep the law; we have the ability to bless others, to worship and honor God in a way that is pleasing to Him.

"Now if the ministry that brought death, which was engraved in letters on stone, came with glory, so that the Israelites could not look steadily at the face of Moses because of its glory, fading though it was, will not the ministry of the Spirit be even more glorious?" (2nd Corinthians 3:7-8) Now we get to the point when we start to understand what God's purpose in the law really is. We see that the ministry of the law brought death. What was engraved with the letters in stone brought death because nobody could keep it. Nobody could stand before God and say they kept all of the law of God, holy and perfectly. As a result, God, in the new covenant, sent Jesus.

The old covenant came with God's glory, too. God's blessing was on it. His

glory was on it. However, it was the weakness of man, his frailty, his inability to do the will of God that caused the law to be, in many reports, not good enough. That is where God in His love sent Jesus. That is the good news. The law drives us to Jesus, and then He gives us the ability to fulfill the law just like He did, and get blessed.

The ministry of the Spirit is even more glorious. *"If the ministry that condemns men is glorious, how much more is the ministry that brings righteousness [right standing with God]! For what was glorious has no glory now in comparison with the surpassing glory. And if what was fading away came with glory, how much greater is the glory of that which lasts!"* (2nd Corinthians 3:9-11) The entire purpose of God's plan of salvation for us is that we might be to the praise of His glory, that we might honor Him.

The glory of God came upon Moses as he received the two tablets of stone wherein God personally, by His own finger, engraved His holy commandments, His holy will into that stone. In the same way, God wants us to glorify Him. In Moses, the glory shone on his face. It was so glorious it shined with the radiance of the glory of God. When he talked with people, they could not take the full glory that was displayed on him, and he had to cover his face.

God's desire is that His glory be displayed in and through us, that the glory not be covered anymore, and that people might know the glory of God through His people. God wants to display His glory, His law, and His holiness in and through us. Therefore, since we have such a hope of the glory of God's work in our lives, we can be very bold. We are not like Moses who put a veil over his face so that the Israelites would not have to gaze at it while the radiance was fading away.

Verse 14-15 tells us: *"But their minds were made dull for to this day the same veil remains when the old covenant is read. It has not been removed, because only in Christ is it taken away. Even to this day when Moses is read, a veil covers their hearts. But whenever anyone turns to the Lord, the veil is taken away. The Lord is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom. And we who with unveiled faces all reflect the Lord's glory are being transformed into His likeness with an ever increasing glory which comes from the Lord who is the Spirit."* (2nd Corinthians 3:_)

The Old Covenant was based on external things such as circumcision, various rituals and rites or worship. The Old Covenant was based on man coming to God through external means. Then the glory of the Lord shone through Moses from the internal to the external, it was too much for the people to handle. They had always related to God from the external. They obeyed the law to avoid the consequences of disobedience. They had never had a sense of the holy purpose of the law wherein they obeyed the law, not because they had to, but because they wanted to.

The law of God is not an external thing written on stone tablets anymore. God has engraved His law upon the hearts of those who love Him. It is God's desire that we obey Him not because we have to, not because of the condemnation of the law, but because we love Him. We follow His commandments because we love Him, and we love to please Him.

Jesus delighted in the Lord. He did what He did because He loved the Father and was always in His perfect will. He is the first born of the new creation of God. His people are able to fulfill the law and honor God in holiness and in worthiness, able to praise God because they love Him. We love God because He first loved us. That is what Jesus is all about.

God put His love within us, and He put Himself within us. He wrote His commandments within our hearts. Not on stone tablets or external things, not an external kind of loving God. The desire of God from the very beginning of creation before the earth was formed has been to be the One who is in us. He desired that we would glorify and honor Him from our hearts because we love Him. The law of God is all about the love of God.

The first tablet of the law dealt with loving God from the heart. The second tablet dealt with loving your neighbor as yourself, from your heart. The commandments detailed what to do and how to do it. I believe that not until people grasp the love of God in Jesus Christ, will they be able to want to obey the commandments of God. There must be love in their hearts for Him. There must be understanding of the great blessing there is in loving God and being a blessing to Him.

"Every high priest is appointed to offer both gifts and sacrifices, so it was necessary for this one also to have something to offer. If He were on earth, He

would not be a priest, for there are already men who offer gifts prescribed by the law.” These are the external offerings and sacrifices given by the law according to the law. “They serve at a sanctuary that is a copy and shadow of what is in heaven. This is why Moses was warned when he was about to build the tabernacle: ‘See to it that you make everything according to the pattern shown you on the mountain.’ ” (Hebrews 8:3-5)

"But the ministry of Jesus has received is as superior to theirs as the covenant of which he is a mediator is superior to the old one, and it is founded on better promises." (Hebrews 8:6)

The law is external, but look at what God does with His holy law. At the end of Hebrews 8, it says that God has established His law. It is higher than ever before because it is no longer external but has become internal through Jesus Christ. *"For if there had been nothing wrong with that first covenant, no place would have been sought for another,"* but God found fault with the people. Note that there was no fault with God's law. The devil would have us believe that God's law was at fault, and that His law was the problem. No. God's law simply brings us to the point where we recognize that we need God and we cannot be right except through Jesus.

We need God, and the law drives us to Jesus. The law shows us our sin. And what happens? The Lord says this about us: *"The time is coming, declares the Lord, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah. It will not be like the covenant I made with their forefathers when I took them by the hand to lead them out of Egypt, because they did not remain faithful to my covenant, and I turned away from them, declares the Lord. This is the covenant I will make with the house of Israel after that time, declares the Lord. I will put my laws in their minds and I will write them on their hearts. I will be their God, and they will be my people. No longer will a man teach his neighbor, or a man his brother, saying, 'Know the Lord,' because they will all know me, from the least of them to the greatest. For I will forgive their wickedness and will remember their sin no more." (Hebrews 8:8-12)*

By calling this covenant new, He has made the first one obsolete. And what is obsolete and aging will soon disappear. Now what has God done? He has seeded His Holy Law within the hearts of His holy people who have been made holy through the blood of Jesus. That is why, as I walk after the Spirit, I will not fulfill

the lusts of the flesh. And that is why, as I walk in the Spirit, I am not under the law because God has placed His law within me, and I naturally want to do His law by the Spirit of God. If I do what the Holy Spirit of God wants me to do, I will do the law of God. I will not even think about it. I will just do it. I will love being obedient, and delighting in the law of God because His way is perfect, just and true.

Hebrews 10:16 tells us that God puts the law in our hearts. That is why we fulfill the law, not because we have to, but because we love God and therefore, want to. It is such a tragedy, as Hebrews 10:26 says, *"For if we sin willfully after that we have received knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins."* What kind of child of God could willfully, knowingly want to go against God?

If there is an area of your life where you are willfully, knowingly continuing to go against God, I encourage you to ask God's forgiveness right now. Let the blood of Jesus be important to you because that is what saves you. Faith in the blood of Jesus saves you. And faith in the fact that God has made you His child, and now He has put His law within your heart. It is your conscience. It is your spirit. It is the law of God, and you know it clearly.

When man fell away from God, the law of God became clouded in his understanding. His conscience became seared, and he could not know the will of God. But the day you went to Jesus, the power and the life of the law of God came alive within you again. It is not for condemnation, but instead, it gives you the ability to know what it means to love God, and what it means to love your neighbor as yourself. Friend, if the blood of Jesus is important to you, you will keep the commandments of God. You will do what He says.

LAW AND GOSPEL
Loved to Obey
Chapter 7

We have been looking at how the law and the gospel work together. Now we will examine how man has violated and rearranged the commandments of God. We will look at what the commandments of God are, and learn how to keep them.

1st John was written to Christians. *"We know that if we have come to know him, we obey his commands. The man who says, "I know him," but does not do what he commands is a liar, and the truth is not in him. But if anyone obeys his word, God's love is truly made complete in him."* (1st John 2:3)

As previously mentioned, the glory of the Lord is displayed upon people who have faith in Jesus Christ, and in whose hearts God has written His law. They then do what God says, not because they have to, but because they want and love to. That is when the glory of the Lord is displayed through a person and God is honored.

"But if anyone obeys his word, God's love is truly made complete in him." (1st John 2:5) This is how we know we are in Jesus. Whoever claims to live in Him must walk as Jesus did. He is our example. He fulfilled the law of God in the same way, and we are to do what He did. We are to obey the commandments He obeyed.

In Exodus 20, there are Ten Commandments given. Jesus, when confronted with the question, "What is the greatest of the commandments?" replied, "The first is to honor the Lord your God with all your heart, your mind and your soul. The second is as the first, to love your neighbor as yourself. This sums up the law and the prophets." The first table of the law summed up loving God, the second in loving your neighbor as yourself. This is how Jesus walked this earth.

Jesus said, *"Do not think that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I have not come to abolish them but to fulfill them."* (Matthew 5) In Hebrews, chapter 8, we see that God's desire is not that the law be done away with, but that the law be written in the hearts and minds of His people who have been washed by the

blood of Jesus, and who have been made sons and daughters of the living God so the glory of the Lord might be displayed. As the glory of the Lord was given the first time when the law was given on Mount Sinai in the form of the tablets on which God wrote by His own finger, in the same way even more glory came with Jesus as the law of God was written in people's hearts in the new covenant.

"Dear friends, I am not writing you a new command but an old one, which you have had since the beginning." (1st John 2:7) The beginning of what? The beginning of creation, before creation was given. "This old command is the message you have heard. Yet I am writing to you a new command."

The word "new" is often misunderstood. People think they are not under the old anymore, they are under the new. They do not realize that the old dealt with externals such as touch not, taste not, what you should eat, drink, or wear, etc. The new has to do with an attitude of the heart, the inner man, the new spirit, and being born again by the Spirit of God. God wants to change the heart, not tablets of stone.

If you read the Bible, you will understand that before Jesus came to earth, people's hearts were as stone to God. They were lifeless and hard with no substance that could be pleasing to Him. But Jesus brings a new heart to people and gives them a heart of flesh and a new life, and written on that heart is the law of God: living.

We love God because He loved us. We want to do what He says not because we have to, afraid of fire and judgment, but because we love God and we know that He wants the best for us.

The word, "new" means fresh. It is a new, fresh command. In other words, it is the old given with a new freshness. God took it from the outside and put it inside with a freshness and a holiness.

2nd Corinthians tells us: "The glory of the Lord wants to be displayed through us as His people." However, over the years, man has come in with his own traditions and doctrines, and has messed up the work of God. Because of this, the commandments of God are hidden from the people. Even today in the body of Christ, there are certain commandments which have not been adhered to because man's traditions, rituals and rites have clouded them. The commandments of men

are not to be observed.

In Matthew 15:8, you will see that the Lord Jesus is confronted with what is clean and unclean, and He says it is not from without a person that defiles him, but what comes out of a person from within that defiles. Jesus said, “*These people honor me with their lips, but their hearts are far from me. They worship me in vain; for their teachings are but rules taught by men, commandments taught by men.*”

Holiness is the call of God for His church today. The people who honor Him with their lips and not their hearts are far from Him. He will say to them, "I do not know you." They are the ones in Matthew 7:22 who will say, “ ‘Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name?’ ” He will say, “*I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity.*” (verse 23) In other words, what came out of their hearts was not saving faith. They said that Jesus Christ is Lord, but their hearts and lives showed differently. They did not follow the commandments of God.

Matthew 15:9 says: “*They worship me in vain [emptiness]; their teachings are but rules taught by men, commandments of men.*” They have no power or virtue and they will not change anyone's life. As such, we are no longer under the ordinances of Moses. Romans 14 tells us we do not have to keep those commandments concerning dietary rules. Although, as has been proven through life, many of the things God listed about what is good to eat and what is not, are actually for our benefit. However, we are not bound to them. We can eat anything we want as long as we pray and sanctify it. I believe that goes into God's law of moderation. There are certain foods which may not be profitable for your body, and perhaps you should consider omitting them from your diet.

Romans 14 also talks about holy days. These were days set aside by God for blood offerings wherein bulls and goats were killed and the blood was taken as an offering to the Lord for sin. In Jesus, however, no more offerings are needed. Therefore, these holy days no longer need to be acknowledged. The blood of Jesus was given as the final sacrifice once and for all.

If someone wants to observe those days as to the Lord, though, Romans 14 tells us we should not hold any derision towards them, nor judge them for it. One should honor God because of love for Him. The only exception is God's Holy Sabbath as recorded in the Ten Commandments. This has been clouded by the traditions and

doctrines of men.

Let us examine what man has done to God's Holy Commandment. In Matthew 5:17-20, Jesus said: *"Do not think that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets. I have not come to abolish them but to fulfill them. I tell you the truth until heaven and earth disappear, not the smallest letter, nor the least stroke of a pen will by any means disappear from the Law until everything is accomplished. Anyone who breaks one of the least of these commandments and teaches others to do the same will be called least in the kingdom of heaven, but whoever practices and teaches these commands will be called great in the kingdom of heaven. For I tell you that unless your righteousness surpasses that of the Pharisees and the teachers of the law, you will certainly not enter into the kingdom of heaven."*

The Pharisees and the teachers of the law added all kinds of their own laws to the law of God. They corrupted the laws; they stretched the laws, and in some cases actually did away with some. They took away the effect of the law and power of the law of God. They changed the law itself.

In Exodus 20 we can simply establish what the law of God is. When you study the Ten Commandments, you must make a distinction which God, Himself, makes. In the Ark of the Covenant were two tablets of the law. But the rest of the law that was given to Moses was put on the outside. This had to do with the ordinances and laws about eating, drinking, holy days, etc. But the Ten Commandments were put into the Ark of the Covenant. It is very important to note that this distinction was made.

Over the years, man has by his traditions and doctrines changed the law of God. This is something that many people, unfortunately, are not aware of, and as a result, you cannot get the blessing if you do not obey it. We find in Exodus 20, the Lord gives the commandments.

"I am the Lord your God, who brought you out of Egypt, out of the land of slavery. You shall have no other gods before me." This is Commandment One.

Commandment Two: *"You shall not make for yourselves an idol in the form of anything in heaven above or on the earth beneath or in the waters below. You shall not bow down to them or worship them; for I, the LORD your God, am a jealous*

God, punishing the children for the sin of the fathers to the third and the fourth generation of those who hate me, but showing love to thousand [generations] of those who love me and keep my commandments."

Commandment Three: *"You shall not misuse the name of the LORD your God, for the Lord will not hold anyone guiltless who misuses His name."*

Commandment Four: *"Remember the Sabbath Day by keeping it holy. Six days you shall labor and do all your work, but the seventh day is a Sabbath to the LORD your God. On it you shall not do any work, neither you, nor your son or daughter, nor your man servant or maidservant, nor your animals, nor the alien within your gates, for in six days the LORD made the heaven and the earth, the sea, and all that is in them, but he rested on the seventh day. Therefore the LORD blessed the Sabbath Day and made it holy."*

The second table of the law deals with loving your neighbor as yourself.

Commandment Five: *"Honor your father and your mother, so that you may live long in the land the LORD your God has given you."*

Commandment Six: *"You shall not murder."*

Commandment Seven: *"You shall not commit adultery."*

Commandment Eight: *"You shall not steal."*

Commandment Nine: *"You shall not give false testimony against your neighbor."*

Commandment Ten: *"You shall not covet your neighbor's house. You shall not covet your neighbor's wife, or his manservant or maidservant, his ox or donkey, or anything that belongs to your neighbor."*

Over the years, the church corrupted the commandments of God. If you look at the catechism of any major body of Christian belief, you will find that the Ten Commandments are to be observed. All of Christendom agrees on that.

However, in the catechisms, the Fourth Commandment, *"Remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy,"* is listed as Number Three. What happened? You will find that one is: *"Thou shall have no other gods before me."* Two is: *"You shall not misuse the name of the LORD. You shall not take the name of the Lord your God in vain."* What happened to the second commandment? The one dealing with graven images, making idols: *"You shall not make for yourself an idol in the form of anything in heaven above or in the earth beneath, or in the waters below."*

Many people have been taught that they ought to have a little statue in their car, or have little graven images to make everything all right, to have peace. What's under all that is Big Bucks! The church changed God's commandment, and deleted Commandment Two. They started making all kinds of graven images, and many were prayed to and worshipped, hoping for some power. God's word specifically tells us we are not make an idol in the form of anything. Not anything, friends.

Making these idols was big business and a lot of money was involved. This was how they paid for churches, how they lined the pockets of ministers and ministries. They had to delete a Commandment of God to justify their actions.

The Fourth Commandment moved up to the third spot. And what happened to the fourth one? In most of the mainline catechisms it simply reads: "Remember the Sabbath Day by keeping it holy." Verses nine through eleven are not included. It should continue to say: "Six days you shall labor and do all your work but the seventh day is the Sabbath to the Lord your God." Why would they shorten it?

I encourage you to study this. To help you, we have a book called "The Everlasting Gospel" which explains these principles in depth. If you want the blessing of God in your life, you will want to keep the Commandments of God the way He wrote them. As far as holiness is concerned, we must realize and understand that we must do things God's way, observe them His way, and in the proper way.

"Six days you shall labor and do all your work, the seventh is the Sabbath to the Lord your God." The seventh day is a twenty-four hour period set aside to the Lord. In my way of thinking, we might as well get the day straight.

In the Bible the first day of the week was Sunday. It was common practice that

the first day begin Saturday night and run through Sunday at dusk. Dusk to dusk is the way the Bible reads. This has been changed. Instead of God's Holy Sabbath on the seventh day, the Lord's Day was moved to the first day, and they worshipped on Sunday.

Of course, we can worship God every day of the week, and we should. We are not referring to the day you go to church. We are talking about a principle, a commandment of God. He says, *"Remember the Sabbath Day by keeping it holy."* That means observing it the way God would have it observed. What happened? Who has a right to change the commandments of God? These were changed by man, not by God.

Nowhere throughout the Bible will you find God changing his Holy Sabbath. Even if you go as far as Revelation, you will find that John was in the Spirit on the Lord's Day. The only day called the Lord's Day throughout Scripture is God's Holy seventh day Sabbath. The ceremonial sabbath was done away with, but not God's Holy Day. I encourage you to study this and consider it for yourself. God has a promise for His people, a blessing which to this date, His church has not yet recognized or realized through separation from the world.

Isaiah 58:13-14 says you shall find your joy and delight in the Lord when you observe God's Holy Day. It is pretty hard to observe something when it has been changed, and you don't even know about it. This was changed centuries ago by man, not by God. If marriage was deleted from the record today, in a hundred years nobody would even know that marriage existed. The true commandment of God was removed along with the blessing of God and changed to a substitute day which did not have His blessing upon it. Scripture says the Lord blessed the Sabbath Day and made it holy . . . not a substitute day, but the Sabbath Day.

What we have here is a change of commandments. Everybody knows that God gave Ten Commandments, so they had to change something else. The tenth commandment was split into two. Even though the second commandment deleted, they still had ten. The fourth one was shortened, and when the Lord's Day was changed, that removed the blessing and power of God.

The Tenth Commandment was divided to make a ninth and tenth as follows. Nine: *"You shall not covet your neighbor's house."* Ten: *"You shall not covet your*

neighbor's wife." This is all documented, and may be examined, so check it out. Just because you have always been taught something by a minister or anyone else in a church, you still need to keep an open mind and examine it for yourself in God's word. I was deceived for years and years before the Holy Spirit of God revealed this truth to me.

Behind every commandment of God is a promise, and God intends for us as His people to have those promises. In these last days God is concerned about holiness in His people. He wants to remove all carnality and fleshly and worldly mindedness. He wants us to have the mind of Christ, and His Spirit flowing in us. Thank God, he has written His commandments in our hearts, but you cannot keep something you do not know about. That's how I found out about God's Holy Sabbath, and about the graven image commandment. We cannot let things be reported as true when they are false.

We don't come to God on our own terms, trying to do things our own way, nor even because somebody else taught it and the tradition has been passed down. It says in Matthew 5:19, "*...whoever practices and teaches these commands will be called great in the kingdom of heaven.*" I want to be great in the kingdom of heaven. I know that greatness comes through being a servant to everyone, through keeping the commandments of God, and stating how God says them without being afraid of what people might think. When God's people are obedient to Him, following His Word, doing it His way, the blessing of God comes.

May His grace be with you. I thank God that His ability is working within you so that you are able to want, and to keep, and to do His commandments as He set them down.