

The Sure Word Bible Studies

Lesson 5

Sin, the Enemy of Good

What is sin? What does the Bible say? When asked this, many people immediately think of I John 3:4 which in the King James Version Bible says:

“Whosoever committeth sin transgresseth also the law: for sin is the transgression of the law.”

For many when the word “law” is seen in the Bible, the Ten Commandments automatically come to mind. But when the Bible uses the word “law” it is not always referring to the Ten Commandments.

The Ten Commandments have the distinction of being the only words written by the finger of God Himself. However, God through Moses, gave other laws as well, such as civil law, health law, and ceremonial law. Looking at the following passages, we see that in the Bible law can be placed into one of five classifications.

1) Health law – Laws given to ensure physical health.

Exodus 15:26 *"If you diligently heed the voice of the LORD your God and do what is right in His sight, give ear to His commandments and keep all His statutes, I will put none of the diseases on you which I have brought on the Egyptians. For I am the LORD who heals you."*

Remember, we learned in a previous lesson that to the writers of scripture, what God does not prevent He causes. He did not afflict the Egyptians with disease, they were diseased because they did not follow good health practices. God gave the Israelites many

health laws, many of the “clean and unclean” regulations were meant for the prevention of diseases.

2) Civil law – Laws given to govern civil society, laws that act as a deterrent to crime.

Deuteronomy 21:21 *"Then all the men of his city shall stone him to death with stones; so you shall put away the evil from among you, and all Israel shall hear and fear."*

The civil laws applied only to the ancient nation of Israel and ceased to be in force when Israel ceased to be an independent nation. The law to stone people became obsolete long ago.

3) Ceremonial law - Laws regulating the sacrificial services at the Sanctuary.

Numbers 9:3 *"On the fourteenth day of this month, at twilight, you shall keep it at its appointed time. According to all its rites and ceremonies you shall keep it."*

These particular laws expired with Christ's death and the destruction of the temple.

4) Moral (right) law - Laws that deal with individual behavior.

Psalms 119:172 *"My tongue shall speak of Your word: for all Your commandments are righteousness."*

Moral means right, doing the right thing. The moral (right) laws will always be effective.

5) Law as a principle or a force -

Romans 7:23 *"But I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members."*

This is not speaking of any written law or code, but the force or power of good or evil within the human being that causes a person to act in a certain way.

We should always consider the setting in which the word “*law*” is used to properly understand which class of “*law*” is being referred to. Otherwise we might “throw the baby out with the bath water” as some have done with the Ten Commandments, claiming they were discarded along with other laws given to the ancient Jewish nation of Israel.

“*Transgression of the law*” is a four-word phrase that is translated from one Greek word, “*anomia*,” which means, “*without law*,” most often translated “*law-lessness*” or *law-less*. It means more than breaking this or that rule. It is an attitude. It is an attitude rooted in selfishness, determined to have our own way no matter what. Without law everyone would be doing whatever he or she wanted to do regardless of others – this is known as anarchy. Anarchy would be a serious problem in a world full of selfish, sinful people.

Thus it is a problem in this world. The Bible says “*All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned, every one, to his own way.*” (Isaiah 53:6)

The Old Testament tells how Moses counseled the children of Israel he led out of Egypt concerning this -

Deuteronomy 12:8 “You shall not at all do as we are doing here today--every man doing whatever is right in his own eyes”

The later Moses commended the same people -

Deuteronomy 13:18 “*Because you have listened to the voice of the LORD your God, to keep all His commandments which I command you today, to do what is right in the eyes of the LORD your God.*”

When you keep God's commandments – you are doing that which is right in the eyes of God. But why should we do what God says? Why should we keep His instructions or His law? Some people will say because God is the Sovereign – the most powerful being in the universe and that gives Him the right to tell us how to behave.

You have probably seen the bumper sticker - *“God said it, I believe it, and that’s all there is to it!”* Some would add to that, *“and if you don’t, you know what will happen to you!”* But is that all there is to it? Is there is no better reason to keep God's law?

We will find the answer to that question when we find the answer as to why God gave the law in the first place.

Romans 3:20 *“Therefore by the deeds of the law no flesh will be justified in His sight: **for by the law is the knowledge of sin.**”*

I Timothy 1:8,9 *“But we know that the law is good, if one uses it lawfully; knowing this, that **the law is not made for a righteous person, but for the lawless and insubordinate**”*

The law is given to inform the lawless what it is to be lawful. For example, when kids are misbehaving, doing disorderly and hurtful things, the parents must “lay down the law” for the good of the household, in the same way our Heavenly Father has had to do that with the human race.

Deuteronomy 6:24,25 *“And the LORD commanded us to observe all these statutes, to fear the LORD our God, **for our good always, that He might preserve us alive, as it is this day.**”*

God is not arbitrary – He does not have a “my way or the highway” attitude. God wants only our good and His law is only given to help us. God's laws are expressions of natural principles rather than arbitrary pronouncements meant to control others.

Because heaven's laws are expressions of natural principles, the principles themselves inherently have their own consequences for compliance or violations. There is no need for external imposed punishments under such a system.

When we look at the Bible as a whole we can see that God's law forms a pyramid. In the book of Exodus we read that after bringing His people out of bondage in Egypt, because they needed them, God gave them many laws and commandments. Later in the New Testament, Jesus lumps them all into two commandments -

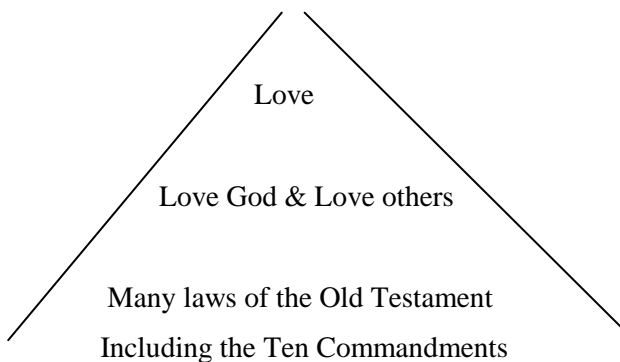
Matthew 22:36 - 40 *"Teacher, which is the great commandment in the law?" Jesus said to him, "You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind.' This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like it: 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself.' **On these two commandments hang all the Law and the Prophets.**"*

But then when we get down to the book of Galatians, all the law is condensed down into one – “love.”

Galatians 5:14 says: *“For all the law is fulfilled in one word, even in this: **you shall love your neighbor as yourself.**”*

The word love in this text is translated from the Greek word “agape,” which is not the warm affection we feel for family or friend, but rather is defined as an unselfish decision to be concerned about the welfare of another, no matter what they've done or who they may be, spouse, friend, family or even an enemy. This is the unconditional love that originates with God.

As we move through the Bible, we find we have come from many “laws” and “commandments” to only one. So the abiding, eternal principal of God's law of love – formed by the ten, the two, and then the one, make up a pyramid of love!



Yet today some Christians have misunderstood this concept and are teaching that Jesus replaced the Ten Commandments with a “new commandment” found in John 13:34 where Jesus says: “A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another; as I have loved you, that you also love one another.”

Saying this Jesus did not do away with the Commandments, but rather He magnified them! It is not God’s desire that the law of Ten Commandments be abolished – but rather that they are moved from the tables of stone to the tables of the heart.

Hebrews 8:10 says *“For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, says the LORD: I will put My laws in their mind and write them on their hearts; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people.”*

To illustrate – A loving parent doesn’t need a law written on the wall or in a book to remind them not to steal from their children. Why? Because they love them and wouldn’t think of doing such a thing. In the same way, when we come to love God and one another we won’t need the Ten Commandments displayed on the wall to remind us of how to behave towards God and one another, it will come naturally. That is what it means to be written in the mind and heart.

In the beginning of this lesson we read that the Bible tells us why we should do what is right in the eyes of the Lord.

Deuteronomy 6:24 *“And the LORD commanded us to do all these statutes, to fear the LORD our God, **for our good always.**”*

If God’s commandments are for our good always – then what can we expect if we ignore or refuse to follow them?

Galatians 6:7,8 *“Do not be deceived, God is not mocked; for whatever a man sows, that he will also reap. For he who sows to his flesh will of the flesh reap corruption, but he who sows to the Spirit will of the Spirit reap everlasting life.”*

This universe is founded on physical and spiritual laws - the law of “reaping and sowing” or “cause and effect.” Bad actions = bad consequences. Right actions = good consequences.

The law of gravity is an example. The law of gravity is God’s law. He put it into place and it serves for our good. If a man ignores the law of gravity and jumps out of an airplane at 12,000 feet without a parachute he would be killed. Did God kill him because he violated His law?

No, he died because the law of gravity caused him to be pulled rapidly to the earth with such force he could not survive the impact. His death is the natural consequence of violating the law of gravity and not because God got angry and punished him for disobeying His law.

It is the same with spiritual laws. If we ignore or refuse to abide by God’s law of love, bad things will happen as result. If I commit adultery, someone gets hurt. If I bear false witness, someone gets hurt. And *every* time someone sins it hurts God. There are natural and unpleasant consequences to every violation of the law of love. Understanding this can help us understand how a person could claim to be free from the law as the Apostle Paul did when he wrote -

I Corinthians 10:23 *“All things are lawful for me, but not all things are helpful: all things are lawful for me, but not all things edify.”*

Paul is saying we are really free to do anything we want to - *but* - sooner or later there will be consequences, either good or bad, depending upon our actions. Note carefully the next two verses.

Ecclesiastes 8:11 *“Because sentence against an evil work is not executed speedily, therefore the heart of the sons of men is fully set in them to do evil.”*

Numbers 32:23 *“But if you do not do so, then take note, you have sinned against the LORD; and be sure your sin will find you out.”*

Sooner or later, be sure *“your sin will find you out.”* The only way to stop the consequences of sin is to stop the sin! The word *“sin”* is translated from the Greek word *“harmatia”* and it means, *“to miss the mark.”*

Romans 3:23 *“For all have sinned, and fall short of the glory of God;”*

And what is the mark we miss? The glory of God. What is the glory of God that we come short of?

II Thessalonians 2:14 *“to which He called you by our gospel, for the obtaining of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ.”*

II Corinthians 3:18 *“But we all, with unveiled face, beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, just as by the Spirit of the Lord.”*

Being like Jesus is our goal, our target – and by beholding Him we are changed into the same image, we become more and more like Him! But we often fall short and “miss the target” – we do not do everything that is right, but if we are willing to listen, and if we

put forth our best effort, we are accepted by God just as if we were perfectly righteous, like Jesus.

We are not “*under the law*” – but rather we “*agree with the law.*” We agree that the law (God's law of love) is good and we do not willfully rebel against it (the basic definition of sin). We no longer keep the law just because God said so. We keep it because we want to behave that way! And if we are doing the things we want to do – we are truly free!

Here is the bottom line - remember what Satan told Eve back in the garden when tempting her to eat of that tree? He said, “*You will know good and evil, you will be wise*” – In other words, Satan was saying, you don't need God to tell you what's right and what is wrong, you are wise enough to determine for yourself what is right and wrong.”

Today, most people believe that lie too. But regardless of what Satan has said or men may think, the truth is that man by himself is not capable of knowing right from wrong. However, if we believe God is who the Bible says He is - the Almighty Creator - all wise - all knowing - knowing the end from the beginning. That He is good - He is love, and His love is an unselfish love that gave itself up at Calvary for us. If God is all that - wouldn't it be wise to listen to what He says? Wouldn't it be best to do those things He says we should do? Wouldn't it be foolish not to?

True faith is trusting God enough to do those things He says are right. We will not do it all perfectly, we will struggle and we will fail at times. But as long as we do not turn away from God and do the best we can, He will never leave us, and we have the assurance of eternal life.

Jude 1:24 “*Now to Him who is able to keep you from stumbling, and to present you faultless before the presence of His glory with exceeding joy,*”

In conclusion, sin is not simply breaking God's law or some rule.

James 4:17 *“Therefore, to him that knows to do good, and does not do it, to him it is sin.”*

But sin is simply rebellion against what a person knows is good and right and deliberately chooses their own selfish way regardless of who may get hurt because of it.

God hates sin! Why? Because He wants things done His way? No - God hates sin because sin hurts and destroys His children! Don't let sin destroy you – God will help you overcome.

Response Questions:

1) Is it clear to you that sin is simply rebelling against what God says is good and right?
Yes __ No __

2) Is it clear to you that sin hurts and destroys?
Yes __ No __

3) Will you take a closer look at God's law of unselfish love and see if there is some area in your life that needs improvement?
Yes __ No __

NOTES
