

Love and Law

Part 3

Introduction.

1. This is the third lesson in this series on “Loving God.”
2. In the first lesson we studied the importance of loving God and what a horrible place this world would be without the love of God.
3. In the second lesson we studied the fact that God wants us to love Him totally and we must love Him with our all if we wish to please Him and be saved.
4. In this lesson we will study “Love and Law” because some have questioned if love and law can coexist and if people can keep God’s laws lovingly.
5. In this lesson we are going to see how loving God and keeping His laws work together.

The Psalmist

1. The writer of the 119th psalm made this petition to God, “Open my eyes, that I may behold Wonderful things from Your law.” (Psa. 119:18).
2. We too need to open our eyes and our hearts to the law of God that we “may behold Wonderful things” from God’s law.
3. Verse 24, of this same psalm, reads like this, “Your testimonies also are my delight; {They are} my counselors.” (Psa. 119:24).
4. When we take time to read and meditate on Scripture, we find wisdom and counsel that abundantly blesses us.
5. It is no wonder the psalmist cried out in verse 97 of this great chapter declaring his love for God’s law by exclaiming, “O how I love Your law! It is my meditation all the day.” (Psa. 119:97).
6. God’s law was the delight of the psalmist and it should be our delight.

The Pharisees

1. The Pharisees were very unlike this psalmist.
2. Jesus addressed them with these harsh words because they ignored God’s laws and followed their own traditions. (Matt. 15:7-9).

Matt 15:7 "You hypocrites, rightly did Isaiah prophesy of you:

Matt 15:8 'THIS PEOPLE HONORS ME WITH THEIR LIPS, BUT THEIR HEART IS FAR AWAY FROM ME.

Matt 15:9 'BUT IN VAIN DO THEY WORSHIP ME, TEACHING AS DOCTRINES THE PRECEPTS OF MEN.'"

- a. The problem with the Pharisees and with many Christians is that by making human traditions they lose sight of God.
- b. Their hearts are so concerned with pleasing themselves that they have no room for God.
- c. People who focus on the instructions God gave us, however, are showing their love and respect for Him.
- d. God gave us His laws, to show His love for us and to protect us. The laws of God are not a burden or grievous. They are for our good. They teach us exactly how to please God and have the abundant life now and in eternity.
- e. It is God's means of telling us what is evil and harmful.
- f. Love and law can and must coexist!

How We Show Our Love For God

1. We read these important words in Mark the 3rd chapter. (Mk. 3:31-35).

Mark 3:31 Then His mother and His brothers *arrived, and standing outside they sent {word} to Him and called Him.

Mark 3:32 A crowd was sitting around Him, and they *said to Him, "Behold, Your mother and Your brothers are outside looking for You."

Mark 3:33 Answering them, He said, "Who are My mother and My brothers?"

Mark 3:34 Looking about at those who were sitting around Him, He *said, "Behold My mother and My brothers!"

Mark 3:35 "For whoever does the will of God, he is My brother and sister and mother."

2. The Lord Jesus teaches that by keeping the Lord's commandments, we show our love for Him and for the Father. The Lord said, "If you love Me, you will keep My commandments." (Jn. 14:15).

3. That seems so simple, and yet our society questions what the Lord says.

4. People want to separate keeping God's commandments and love.

- a. They think if someone keeps a commandment, they are merely observing a meaningless ritual or trying to earn salvation.
- b. It seems they may not understand obedience the way the Lord Jesus understood it.
- c. Jesus understood it as the manifestation of love and trusting faith.

5. On another occasion Jesus spoke these words. (Jn. 14:23-24).

John 14:23 Jesus answered and said to him, "If anyone loves Me, he will keep My word; and My Father will love him, and We will come to him and make Our abode with him.

John 14:24 "He who does not love Me does not keep My words; and the word which you hear is not Mine, but the Father's who sent Me.

- a. The Father and the Lord Jesus make their home with those they love, and they love the people who love them enough to keep their words.

- b. Love cares enough to obey.
- c. When people fail to keep His words, they show that they do not love the Lord.
- d. These words are not merely the words of Jesus; they also belong to the Father.
- e. The Lord Jesus, as we read in Mark 3:33-35, asked, ““who are My mother and My brothers?”
- f. And looking about at those who were sitting around Him, He said, “Behold My mother and My brothers! For whoever does the will of God, he is My brother and sister and mother.”

7. The Lord Jesus teaches us in how to love the Father. (Jn. 15:8-10).

John 15:8 "My Father is glorified by this, that you bear much fruit, and {so} prove to be My disciples.

John 15:9 "Just as the Father has loved Me, I have also loved you; abide in My love.

John 15:10 "If you keep My commandments, you will abide in My love; just as I have kept My Father's commandments and abide in His love.

- a. We show our love by keeping God’s commandments.
- b. We show it by bearing “much fruit.”

8. We must follow the Lord’s example and prove our discipleship by keeping the Father’s commandments.

Authentic Christianity

1. Authentic Christianity, real Christianity; authentic obedience, real obedience is always motivated by the cross, by the love that we have for the Lord Jesus Christ.

2. We cannot assume, as some do, that simply because someone obeys and insists on obedience that he is legalistic or a Pharisee.

3. The apostle Paul wrote the important words about “the love of Christ. (2 Cor. 5:14-15).

2 Cor 5:14 For the love of Christ controls us, having concluded this, that one died for all, therefore all died;

2 Cor 5:15 and He died for all, so that they who live might no longer live for themselves, but for Him who died and rose again on their behalf.

- a. The love of Christ controlled Paul and motivated him to live for Jesus and His love should control us and motivate us to loving obedience.
- b. There are no selfish or self-serving motives here, but pure and authentic love for Christ. That is what God wants: love that keeps His commandments, His laws that are written on our hearts. (Heb. 8:10).

4. We need to pay careful attention to what John wrote in 1 John 2:3-6.

1 John 2:3 By this we know that we have come to know Him, if we keep His commandments.

1 John 2:4 The one who says, "I have come to know Him," and does not keep His commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him;

1 John 2:5 but whoever keeps His word, in him the love of God has truly been perfected. By this we know that we are in Him:

1 John 2:6 the one who says he abides in Him ought himself to walk in the same manner as He walked.

- a. To know the Lord, in this passage, means to have a close, loving relationship with Him.

- b. That relationship is demonstrated by keeping commandments.
- c. Complete love for God means one is devoted to keeping the words of the Lord.
- d. For the weak or nominal Christian keeping commandments is burdensome. It's a drudgery to them.
- e. The authentic Christian delights in keeping God's commandments.
 - 1) John wrote these words in 1 John 5:2-3.

1 John 5:2 By this we know that we love the children of God, when we love God and observe His commandments.

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

- 2) True Christians find delight in God's commandments because they know that every commandment of God is for our good and our blessing.
- 3) They realize that the words of Jesus lead to eternal life and to living abundantly here and now.

Some Deny A Law Of Christ Exist

1. Some today contend that a law of Christ does not exist, but the Scriptures speak differently.
2. They have read some passages which speak a truth, but they do not give the whole truth.
3. For instance, they might cite Romans 3:28, where Paul says, "For we maintain that a man is justified by faith apart from works of the Law."
 - a. They might cite Galatians 2:21, where Paul says, "I do not nullify the grace of God, for if righteousness {comes} through the Law, then Christ died needlessly."
 - b. But the context of both of these passages are speaking of the Law of God given to Moses.
 - c. The Law of Moses surely does not justify anyone today under Christ.
 - d. We should not confuse the Law of Moses with the commandments found in the New Testament that come from Jesus our Lord.
4. There are other people who cite Ephesians 2:8-10, which says,

Eph 2:8 "For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, {it is} the gift of God;

Eph 2:9 not as a result of works, so that no one may boast.

Eph 2:10 For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand so that we would walk in them."

 - a. Truly we cannot earn our way to heaven. No one can say he/she is so good and has done so much that God owes him/her salvation.
 - b. We should not, however, confuse obedience to Christ with some effort that earns salvation apart from the grace of God.
 - c. **We do not earn our salvation, but we must respond to grace.**

d. Faith and obedience are conditions to receive the free gift of salvation.

5. Obedience is the response to the grace of God, not some work of merit that earns us salvation.

a. While the grace of God is unmerited and undeserved, it is by no means unconditional.

b. While God offers His grace to every man, not everyone accepts the gift of grace.

c. Many choose to serve the world and they lose sight of the price Jesus paid to save us.

6. The Scriptures do indeed speak of the law of Christ, and God expects faithful Christians to keep Christ's law.

a. Listen to the inspired Word of God. (1 Cor. 9:19-21).

1 Cor 9:19 For though I am free from all {men,} I have made myself a slave to all, so that I may win more.

1 Cor 9:20 To the Jews I became as a Jew, so that I might win Jews; to those who are under the Law, as under the Law though not being myself under the Law, so that I might win those who are under the Law;

1 Cor 9:21 to those who are without law, as without law, though not being without the law of God but under the law of Christ, so that I might win those who are without law.

b. Paul was under the law of Christ and so are all Christians.

c. Galatians 6:2 says, "Bear one another's burdens, and thereby fulfill the law of Christ."

d. Like Paul, James also understood that Christians are under a law. (Jas. 2:10-12).

James 2:10 For whoever keeps the whole law and yet stumbles in one {point,} he has become guilty of all.

James 2:11 For He who said, "DO NOT COMMIT ADULTERY," also said, "DO NOT COMMIT MURDER."

Now if you do not commit adultery, but do commit murder, you have become a transgressor of the law.

James 2:12 So speak and so act as those who are to be judged by {the} law of liberty.

1) Yes, the law of Christ is "the law of liberty." (Jas. 1:25; 2:12).

2) Obedience to the Lord is not an option; it is a necessity to please God.

3) John 3:36 says, "He who believes in the Son has eternal life; but he who does not obey the Son will not see life, but the wrath of God abides on him."

4) When people refuse to do as God instructs they cannot expect to have eternal life, but they can expect to face the wrath of God.

5) Everything that is in the gospel points to faith and obedience! Hebrews 11.

6) Paul said that he "received grace and apostleship to bring about the obedience of faith for the sake of his name (that is the name of Christ) among all the nations" (Romans 1:5).

7) He wanted people not only to believe but also to obey.

8) In fact, the apostle Paul, in the book of Romans, tells how a slave of sin is freed from that sin and becomes a slave of righteousness.

9) Our transformation into children of God is not by faith alone, but it includes our obedience. (Rom. 6:17-18).

Rom 6:17 But thanks be to God that though you were slaves of sin, you became obedient from the heart to that form of teaching to which you were committed,

Rom 6:18 and having been freed from sin, you became slaves of righteousness.

- 10) God set these slaves of sin free from that sin, when they became obedient from their hearts to His Son and His teaching.

Believing The Gospel

1. If we believe the gospel, we will obey the gospel [the good news] of Christ.

2. Our salvation comes when we become obedient!

3. Paul penned these words. (2 Thess. 1:7-9).

2 Thess 1:7 and {to give} relief to you who are afflicted and to us as well when the Lord Jesus will be revealed from heaven with His mighty angels in flaming fire,

2 Thess 1:8 dealing out retribution to those who do not know God and to those who do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus.

2 Thess 1:9 These will pay the penalty of eternal destruction, away from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of His power,

- a. Jesus set the example of obedience for us and He obeyed the Father so that we can be saved. (Heb. 5:8-9).

Heb 5:8 Although He was a Son, He learned obedience from the things which He suffered.

Heb 5:9 And having been made perfect, He became to all those who obey Him the source of eternal salvation,

- b. Jesus was not a legalist or a Pharisee, but He was obedient because He loved the Father.

- 1) Jesus said, "but so that the world may know that I love the Father, I do exactly as the Father commanded Me" (Jn. 14:31).

- 2) Jesus not only obeyed the Father, He obeyed Him exactly and He did just as the Father commanded Him.

- 3) He did not add to the Father's instructions or take away from them, but He carefully did exactly what the Father told Him to do.

4. Doing things carefully and precisely as we are instructed shows conscientiousness, carefulness and love.

- a. It means we take the Lord seriously and lovingly, just as Jesus did His Father.

- b. Those who love God and His Son keep their commandments.

- c. Out of love they trust and obey.

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