

Title: The Purpose of the Law Text: 1 Timothy 1:8-11

1. The Law is Good when used Lawfully v8

1. Paul is condemning the legalist. But that doesn't mean the Law is bad. It is good when one uses it correctly. So what is the purpose of the Law?
2. The Law itself isn't sinful or evil. It is holy and good. But it has to be used correctly! And the problem Paul is addressing and we still have today is that people don't know how to use the Law. Remember what we read last week about the false teachers.
 1. 1 Timothy 1:6-7 NKJV - "from which some, having strayed, have turned aside to idle talk, 7 desiring to be teachers of the law, understanding neither what they say nor the things which they affirm"
3. We saw that the purpose of godly Bible teaching is to produce love, not disputes, disagreements, and division. Godly Bible teaching should build in me a greater love for God and His people, not lift my ego.
4. But the false teachers, rejecting this, turn to myths, hobby horses, and empty talk that makes them sound spiritual, though they aren't, and the main thing they focus on is the law, but they have no understanding of how the law actually works.
5. Most people will use the Law, be it the ten commandments or picking and choosing from the Old Testament books such as tithing, and present to you that now that Jesus lives in, you have to obey it, that by living these out you'll become more sanctified, you'll grow spiritually.
6. We may also create our own. We create the concept of Spiritual Disciplines: Bible Reading, Prayer, Fasting, Serving, Giving, and if you do these you'll grow and become more sanctified and please God. We create 5 steps to prayer, we make different programs, methods, and plans.
7. And though many of these aren't wrong in and of themselves, it shows a deep misunderstanding of the purpose of the Law.
8. Galatians 3:21-25 NKJV - "Is the law then against the promises of God? Certainly not! For if there had been a law given which could have given life, truly righteousness would have been by the law. 22 But the Scripture has confined all under sin, that the promise by faith in Jesus Christ might be given to those who believe. 23 But before faith came, we were kept under guard by the law, kept for the faith which would afterward be revealed. 24 Therefore the law was our tutor to bring us to Christ, that we might be justified by faith. 25 But after faith has come, we are no longer under a tutor."
9. Romans 7:12-13 NKJV - "Therefore the law is holy, and the commandment holy and just and good. 13 Has then what is good become death to me? Certainly not! But sin, that it might appear sin,

was producing death in me through what is good, so that sin through the commandment might become exceedingly sinful."

10. So what do the scriptures say when put together? The Law has a correct way to be used, a distinct purpose. That purpose isn't to make us more holy or sanctified. It is to reveal our sin and need for a savior.
11. Its purpose is two fold: Reveal our sinfulness, and show us our need for Christ. Those two can be combined, but regardless that is what the Law is for.
12. Paul shows clearly in these distinct scriptures that the Law isn't to help you grow or become more godly, it was sent so we may realize how ungodly we are!
13. The Law is like a mirror, a tool to show us what we truly look like. It can also be seen as an X-ray or MRI. It reveals our problem.
14. However, the law can't fix our problem. It shows and teaches us the truth of our state, but not how to get out of it. This is the great confusion and disconnect. People think that through the Law they can grow and become godlier, but all they'll do is fail and realize their weakness, or become hypocritical and prideful by creating extra "rules" they think they can obey, while missing the main point of it all.
15. This then builds on the questions "so who is the Law for if it is still useful and good?"

2. The Law is not for the Righteous v9a

1. Let's first establish who the Law is NOT for. It is not for the righteous person. Now some will go and quote "no one is righteous! No, not one!" but this is talking about humanity's ability to achieve it themselves.
2. So who is a righteous person?
 1. **Galatians 3:10-14, 19 NKJV - "For as many as are of the works of the law are under the curse; for it is written, "Cursed is everyone who does not continue in all things which are written in the book of the law, to do them." 11 But that no one is justified by the law in the sight of God is evident, for "the just shall live by faith." 12 Yet the law is not of faith, but "the man who does them shall live by them." 13 Christ has redeemed us from the curse of the law, having become a curse for us (for it is written, "Cursed is everyone who hangs on a tree"), 14 that the blessing of Abraham might come upon the Gentiles in Christ Jesus, that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith...What purpose then does the law serve? It was added because of transgressions, till the Seed should come to whom the promise was made; and it was appointed through angels by the hand of a mediator."**

2. Galatians 4:4-7 NKJV - "But when the fullness of the time had come, God sent forth His Son, born of a woman, born under the law, 5 to redeem those who were under the law, that we might receive the adoption as sons. 6 And because you are sons, God has sent forth the Spirit of His Son into your hearts, crying out, "Abba, Father!" 7 Therefore you are no longer a slave but a son, and if a son, then an heir of God through Christ"
3. Romans 8:3-4 NKJV - "3 For what the law could not do in that it was weak through the flesh, God did by sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, on account of sin: He condemned sin in the flesh, 4 that the righteous requirement of the law might be fulfilled in us who do not walk according to the flesh but according to the Spirit."
4. 2 Corinthians 5:16-21 NKJV - "16 Therefore, from now on, we regard no one according to the flesh. Even though we have known Christ according to the flesh, yet now we know Him thus no longer. 17 Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new. 18 Now all things are of God, who has reconciled us to Himself through Jesus Christ, and has given us the ministry of reconciliation, 19 that is, that God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself, not imputing their trespasses to them, and has committed to us the word of reconciliation. 20 Now then, we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God were pleading through us: we implore you on Christ's behalf, be reconciled to God. 21 For He made Him who knew no sin to be sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him."
5. Hebrews 9:12-15 NKJV - "Not with the blood of goats and calves, but with His own blood He entered the Most Holy Place once for all, having obtained eternal redemption. 13 For if the blood of bulls and goats and the ashes of a heifer, sprinkling the unclean, sanctifies for the purifying of the flesh, 14 how much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered Himself without spot to God, cleanse your conscience from dead works to serve the living God? 15 And for this reason He is the Mediator of the new covenant, by means of death, for the redemption of the transgressions under the first covenant, that those who are called may receive the promise of the eternal inheritance."
6. Hebrews 9:26-28 NKJV - "He then would have had to suffer often since the foundation of the world; but now, once at the end of

the ages, He has appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself. 27 And as it is appointed for men to die once, but after this the judgment, 28 so Christ was offered once to bear the sins of many. To those who eagerly wait for Him He will appear a second time, apart from sin, for salvation.”

7. Hebrews 10:4-10 NKJV - “For it is not possible that the blood of bulls and goats could take away sins. 5 Therefore, when He came into the world, He said: “Sacrifice and offering You did not desire, But a body You have prepared for Me. 6 In burnt offerings and sacrifices for sin You had no pleasure. 7 Then I said, ‘Behold, I have come— In the volume of the book it is written of Me— To do Your will, O God.’ ” 8 Previously saying, “Sacrifice and offering, burnt offerings, and offerings for sin You did not desire, nor had pleasure in them” (which are offered according to the law), 9 then He said, “Behold, I have come to do Your will, O God.” He takes away the first that He may establish the second. 10 By that will we have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all.”

3. The overwhelming evidence of scripture, and there are more verses, is that the Law is NOT for the believer. We are dead to the Law, because we have become Righteous through faith in Jesus. By believing in His finished work: that He died for the sins of the world, dealing with the problem of sin once and for all time, and that through the resurrection He defeats death, and brings us life, that is what can transform us.
4. It is by faith in the person and work of Jesus alone, that a profound transformation happens in your life. You are made right with God. At the moment of belief, where you receive Him into you and His life comes into you, at that moment, you are made completely holy, righteous and sanctified.
5. You don't have to work at becoming more righteous, holy or sanctified. He does it instantly. What you do have to do is learn what that means. And you learn this through a personal relationship with Jesus.
6. As you get to know Him as a person better and more intimately, you learn about all He has done for you, the new you He has made by His life. You are “born again”, literally like you were born as a child again and have to relearn how to live life. Your values, ideas and world view have to be changed over time as you get to know Jesus. This is maturing. But it doesn't make you more righteous or sanctified. But you live more in the reality of what God has done.
7. So because Jesus has made you righteous, guess what? The Law is not for you! As you get to know Jesus and the inheritance He has given you through His life, you will naturally live differently, and won't want to break

the Law. You don't need it to live a godly life. This doesn't mean we throw away rules and standards, because as we are learning, we do want order in God's house. But we know those rules and standards don't make us more holy, and we don't punish someone based on them, but we may bring discipline.

8. So then who is the Law for?!

3. **Who is the Law For? v9b-11**

1. Paul gives us a clear list, and it is not the first time he does so. There are lists of these all over the epistles. What do they reveal? That the law is for the unbeliever. Those who reject Jesus and His life. Those who seek to live life their own way and by their own rules.
2. In this lists, Paul actually connects to these actions to the Law:
 1. **Lawless and insubordinate**: For those who clearly disdain the law and revolt against it. They reject authority and live in open defiance of laws as fulfilling their own desires is the priority of their lives.
 2. **Ungodly and sinners**: for those who clearly reject God and live sinful lives in general. They show a blatant disregard of the Gospel, God and His Law, they mock and treat God irreverently.
 3. **Unholy & Profane**: The idea of someone who lacks and disregards good character and piety. They reject a clear sense of morality and choose to blaspheme and live contrary to God.
 4. **Murderers of Fathers and Murderers of Mothers, for manslayers**: Those who mistreat their parents and murderers and lumped together. It's the idea of patricide or matricide, and manslayers is a general term for a murderer, someone who kills unjustly. Even in the New Covenant that no longer functions under the law, it is seen as important to care for your parents as they age. To horribly neglect or abuse them to where they can die is held in the same category as a murderer.
 5. **For fornicators, for sodomites**: Fornicator means a sexually immoral person and carries a general idea of sexual sins from prostitution to promiscuity. Sodomite in the Greek speaks of homosexual practices, especially as the dominant partner. So Paul condemns sexual perversion of any sort beyond a marriage of one man, one woman.
 6. **Kidnapper**: has the idea of a slave trader, specifically one who kidnaps others to sell them into slavery. Though slavery was widely practiced in the Roman world, much of it did have laws and rules that ensured proper treatment, even educating and freeing them, many fell into it due to debt or having lost in battle. Even in the Old Testament, the Lord knew people would do it because of the evil in their hearts, so He set up laws to protect the slaves. But there were

still many who sold others in terrible ways. It was Christians who led the abolition of slavery. And even as early as when they wrote the declaration of independence, the founding fathers had a fight about abolishing slavery. Today, human trafficking should be seen as modern slavery, and if we are able, we should support efforts to stop it, which include ending pornography and other institutions that profit from it.

7. **For liars, for perjurers:** those who openly give false witness or lie constantly. Gossip can fall into this category, as it often attacks an individual's character with little evidence and no desire to confront directly.
8. **And if there is any other thing contrary to sound doctrine:** Paul lets it be known the list goes on, but leaves it to the Law to deal with. Anything that goes against God's Word or God's nature would be subject to the Law and that person is cursed unless they willingly come to the Lord and receive His life.
3. Anything that goes against the Gospel, which is the only message that can save and make us right with God, falls under this category. Paul was entrusted with the greatest message in history. Though this list of people condemned by the Law to hell and death is long, in Jesus we find the way to be saved and brought to life and liberty!
4. So who will you be? Will you be made righteous by faith in Christ, or choose to be condemned under the Law? It is your call. But the Glorious Gospel entrusted to Paul offers you life, freedom, and an inheritance as a Child of God. Obtain it by faith! You may live some of those lifestyles even now, but know He has forgiven you and invites you to receive His life by faith! Will you do it?
5. For the rest of us, let's celebrate in communion the finished work of the Gospel of Jesus!

Discussion Questions:

1. **What does it mean that "the Law is good if one uses it lawfully"?** How have you seen people either misuse the Law or misunderstand its purpose in the church today?
2. **The primary purpose of the Law is to reveal sin and point people to Christ.** Why is it important to understand this purpose correctly? What problems arise when people use the Law as a means of becoming righteous?
4. **Many Christians can unintentionally turn spiritual disciplines (prayer, Bible reading, fasting, serving, etc.) into a form of legalism.** How can we pursue these practices in a way that deepens our relationship with Christ rather than becoming a system of earning God's approval?
5. **Believers are made righteous through faith in Christ and not through obedience to the Law.** How does this truth affect the way you view your relationship with God, especially when you struggle with sin or failure?
6. **What is the difference between spiritual maturity and trying to make yourself more righteous?** How can someone continue growing as a Christian while resting in the finished work of Christ?
7. **Self-Reflection: When you think about your spiritual life right now, do you feel you live more like you are trying to earn God's approval or a son/daughter learning to live in the reality of God's love and acceptance?**