

Law & Grace

Part 1

by:

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Many Christians have been taught that the Law is opposed to Grace. However, nothing could be further from the truth. Justification by works is opposed to grace as it is written, "**For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God; not as a result of works, that no one should boast**" (Eph. 2:8-9 NAS).

But law is not opposed to grace, rather grace is given that people might understand the righteousness of God required by the law and keep it. Also, grace is given so that when we fall short, we are not condemned, but can receive forgiveness and continue on with God through faith.

Before we look more in depth at the Christian and the Law of God, I want to present the Law and its purpose for the sinner and how we are to use it in witnessing to them. The inspiration for this message came as a result of reading an excellent book that I recommend you read, Hell's Best Kept Secret by Ray Comfort. A major portion for evangelism and the quotes from great Christian preachers of the past are abridged from his book.

What are the purposes of the Law relating to the sinner and in witnessing to him?

1) The Law is to be given to the sinner so that he can see what sin is. The law gives us an understanding of sin, of what sin is. We read in the New Testament, "**By the works of the Law no flesh will be justified in His sight; for through the Law comes the knowledge of sin**" (Rom. 3:20 NAS). No one can know or understand what sin is unless they are instructed out of God's word. Again it is written, "**Sin is the transgression of the law,**" or literally "**sin is lawlessness**" (I Jn. 3:4 KJV). Paul puts it so very clearly when he says, "**I would not have come to know sin except through the Law; for I would not have known about coveting if the Law had not said, 'You shall not covet'**" (Rom. 7:7 NAS). So then, what a great disservice we do for sinners when we expect them to repent of their sins and do not explain to them what sin is and what are the consequences of it! I can still remember so very vividly a conversation I had with some Christians before I was saved. A young girl said to me, "John, you need to be saved." To this I replied very emphatically, "Saved! Saved from what?" She then told

me gently, "Sin!" to which I replied as emphatically as before, "Sin? What Sin?" You see, I was so ignorant of God's word, and I was keeping my standards pretty well, and had no consciousness of sin.

A short time ago I received a tract left at my door by someone from a local congregation. I read it carefully several times as it told the reader he needed a Saviour from sin, but not what sin was. How tragic that we are not telling sinners why they are sinners, in order for them to see their need of the Saviour from sin!

2) Another reason for the Law is so that a sinner will realize his guilt. Sinners need to know that they have broken God's laws, that they are therefore guilty and under the judgement of a Holy God. The scripture says, "**Now we know that what things soever the law saith, it saith to them who are under the law: that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty [upodikos: under judgment] before God**" (Rom. 3:19 KJV).

Sinners need to know that they have offended God and are guilty.

The NAS translates this that "**all the world may become accountable to God.**" When we are guilty of breaking God's Law, we must not only realize that we are guilty, but that we must give an account of our guilt, because we are "under the judgement of God." And that is what a literal translation of this Greek word means; "upo" means "under" and "dikos" means "judgment," therefore "under judgment." And sinners need to know that they are subject to the just punishment of a Holy God and that is why they need a Saviour, because, "**It is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment**" (Heb. 9:27 KJV).

3) The third reason we must give the law to sinners is to bring them to Christ. It is written, "**the law was our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith**" (Gal. 3:24 KJV). The NAS translates this word as "tutor," or literally, "child-conductor."

Once a sinner sees knows what sin is and that he is guilty, he then will see his need of a Saviour that can deliver him from its power and consequences.

4) The fourth reason for the Law that I would like to add for sinners is that they might know and understand the consequences of sin and their just punishment for sin, both in this life and in eternity. We must understand that Law is needed for the preservation, peace, and safety of society. "Law and order" is often the cry today, but the godless and lawless have systematically been changing the righteous laws of our land so that lawlessness is not properly punished, and consequently we have ten times as many people in prisons as in a heathen country like Japan. The scripture says, "**Because the sentence against an evil deed is not executed quickly, therefore the hearts of the sons of men among them are given fully to do evil**" (Eccl. 8:11 NAS).

What Paul wrote many years ago we must understand, and be as salt and influence society. He wrote: "**we know that the Law is good, if one uses it lawfully, realizing the fact that law is not made for a righteous man, but for those who are lawless and rebellious, for the ungodly and sinners, for the unholy and profane, for those who kill their fathers or mothers, for murderers, for fornicators, for homosexuals, for kidnappers, for liars, for perjurers, and whatever else is contrary to sound teaching, according to the glorious gospel of the blessed God**" (I Tim. 1:8-11 NAS lit.).

We have been allowing the false religious teachers and the kind of people the law was made for to change our scriptural laws to protect themselves, and consequently they are now even making laws to punish the righteous and reward the wicked.

Now, to emphasize the need to use the law in witnessing to others, let us look at what some of the great men of the past, soul winners par excellence, had to say.

Charles Finney said:

"It is of great importance that the sinner should be made to feel his guilt, and not left to the impression that he is unfortunate.

"Do not be afraid, but show him the breadth of the Divine Law, and the exceeding strictness of its precepts. Make him see how it condemns his thoughts and life.

"By a convicted sinner, I mean one who feels himself condemned by the Law of God, as a guilty sinner."

C.G.F. in Revival Lectures

John Wesley said:

"Before I can preach love, mercy, and grace, I must preach sin, Law, and judgment."

"Preach 90% Law and 10% grace."

Charles Spurgeon said:

"They must be slain by the Law before they can be made alive by the gospel!"

"But, more, there is war between thee and God's Law. The Ten Commandments are against thee. The first comes forward and says, 'Let him be cursed, for he denies Me. He has another god besides Me, his god is his belly, he yieldeth homage to his lust.' All the Ten Commandments, like ten great cannons, are pointed at thee today, for you have broken all God's statutes, and lived in daily neglect of all His commands.

"Soul! thou wilt find it a hard thing to go to war with the Law...What will ye do when the Law comes in terror, when the trumpet of the archangel shall tear you from your grave, when the eyes of God shall burn their way into your guilty soul, when the great books shall be opened, and all your sin and shame shall be punished?"

D.L. Moody said:

"God, being a perfect God, had to give a perfect Law, and the Law was given not to save men, but to measure them."

"...why was it given...**'That every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God'** (Rom. 3:19). The Law stops every man's mouth. I can always tell a man who is near the kingdom of God; his mouth is stopped. This, then is why God gives us the Law -- to show us ourselves in our true colors."

D.L. Moody in Select Sermons

The Holy Spirit has spoken to us through David that,

"The Law of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul." Psalm 19:7 KJV

The Hebrew word for converting means literally "to turn."

Yes, if we are going to see sinners converted rightly to real faith in our Lord Jesus Christ, we must work as He says so as to allow the Holy Spirit to:

"convict the world concerning sin, and righteousness, and judgment." Jesus in John 16:8 NAS

When Paul reasoned with Felix concerning **"the faith in Christ,"** it was:

"of righteousness, self-control and the judgment to come." Acts 24:24-25 NAS

Dear friends, if we are going to make real disciples for our Lord Jesus Christ, we must preach the gospel as it was meant to be preached, and that is preceded by:

"the Law of God *which* is holy, and the commandment holy, and just and good." Romans 7:12 KJV

Unless we teach people one of the first principles of Christ, eternal judgment, we will only produce backsliders and lukewarm Christians most of the time! (Heb. 6:1-2). Experience has proven that the easy believism of our day is a horrible failure, a product of a church that Christ will spue out of His mouth when He returns! (Rev. 3:14-22). It

has been said by Ray Comfort, an experienced evangelist, that the gospel of grace presented without conviction by the Holy Spirit for sin and offending God, and without the knowledge of eternal judgment, not only results in a high degree of backsliders, but inoculates them against the true gospel as they have tried what they thought was the faith and did not find it satisfying. How different from a true believer who loves God with all his heart and in whom, "**The law of God is hidden in his heart**" and says, "**Oh, how I love thy Law.**" "**It is sweeter than honey and the honeycomb**" (Psa. 40:8; 119:11, 47, 48, 97; 19:10). And John wrote, "**This is the love of God, that we keep His commandments**" (I John 5:3).

Let us pray that we and the entire church of our Lord Jesus Christ will preach the whole gospel as the early apostles and disciples of the Lord did, and reap the great harvest that has been promised and is waiting now at this time of the end! Amen!!

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