

What Is the Law Good For?

Lesson #3 – Blessed is the Man who Delights in the Law

¹ **Blessed is the man**

Who walks not in the counsel of the ungodly,
Nor stands in the path of sinners,
Nor sits in the seat of the scornful;

² But **his delight is in the law of the Lord**,
And in His law he meditates day and night.

³ He shall be like a tree
Planted by the rivers of water,
That brings forth its fruit in its season,
Whose leaf also shall not wither;
And whatever he does shall prosper.

- Psalm 1:1-3

A. Rightly Dividing the Word of God: We cannot attain righteousness through the Law, but we can learn about righteousness through the Law.

Three errors to avoid:

- 1) We cannot be justified by keeping the law – the 1st tense error of legalism.
- 2) We cannot be practically sanctified by keeping the law – the 2nd tense error of legalism.
- 3) We cannot be practically sanctified by ignoring God's righteousness – the 2nd tense error of license.

B. The Old Testament Law is still good and valuable for Christians.

- 1) The New Testament affirms the enduring value of the Law:
 - Romans 7:7a – “What shall we say then? Is the law sin? Certainly not!”
 - Romans 7:12 – “Therefore the law is holy, and the commandment holy and just and good.”
 - Romans 7:14 – “For we know that the law is spiritual, but I am carnal, sold under sin.”
 - 2 Timothy 3:14-17
 - Matthew 5:17-19

Summary of the Reformers teachings about three ways in which the Law is valuable:

- 1st – To make our sinfulness apparent, and thus to make our need for Christ apparent.
- 2nd – To restrain sin by making the parameters of morality plain.
- 3rd – To provide a vision for true morality according to the character of God.

2) Jesus taught from the Law, but He did not expect anyone to attain righteousness by keeping the Law. Matthew 5:20-26 is a great case study.

- Grounding perspective on The Sermon on the Mount in Matt. 5-7:
 - The purpose of the Sermon was to instruct those who believed on Christ as Messiah and to condemn those who had not yet done so.
 - Jesus raises the level of righteousness from a relative human standard to a divine standard Jesus shows that mankind cannot reach this level of righteousness. (Especially in Matt. 5:20).
 - For those who have accepted Jesus as the Messiah, it puts forth the righteous principles to be employed by faith as Jews until the kingdom is set up. It also teaches trans-dispensational principles which are to be applied by faith for the believer today.
- **Law addressed:** “You shall not murder” (Exodus 20:13, Deuteronomy 5:17)
- **Heart-issue:** unjust anger and hate
 - “whoever is angry with his brother without cause”
 - “whoever says to his brother, ‘Raca!’...whoever says, ‘You fool!’”
- This passage demonstrates some reasons why the Law prohibits murder:
 - (1) God highly values the person who would be killed (or otherwise hurt by anger)
 - Compare Genesis 9:6, James 3:8-10
 - (2) God has designed you for a purer purpose than to be overcome by undue anger.

3) The New Testament bases many teachings on Christian conduct upon different points of the Law. Examples include:

- Christians should financially support for spiritual teachers.
 - Taught in 1 Cor. 9:8-14; 1 Tim. 5:17-18
 - Based upon Deut. 25:4; Luke 10:7
- Christian children should obey parents.
 - Taught in Eph. 6:1-3; Col. 3:20
 - Based upon Ex. 20:12; Deut. 5:16
- Christians should be truthful with one another.
 - Taught in Eph. 4:25
 - Based upon Ex. 20:16; Deut. 5:20; Zech. 8:16-17