

PRESENT TRUTH

A Teaching Letter of Lifestream Teaching Ministries

For this reason, I will not be negligent to remind you always of these things, though you know and are established in the present truth. (2 Peter 1:12 NKJV)

Volume 16, Issue 3

March 2018

Lawlessness

Introduction

Lawlessness means without law. Being lawless is a serious condition. It is declared to be sin in the Scriptures [*1 John 3:4*] and, according to Jesus, has serious consequences.

Matthew 13:41 NASB

(41) "The Son of Man will send forth His angels, and they will gather out of His kingdom all stumbling blocks, and those who commit lawlessness,

At the time of the end, the Lord's angels will remove all of those in His Kingdom who commit, that is practice, lawlessness.

Why is this important to us now? Because there is a faction of the Church that is teaching that we, as participants in the New Covenant, are under grace and the law does not apply to us in any way. Any mention of being obedient to God's commands immediately receives a rebuke that says we are spouting legalism and trying to bring the people back under the law.

The ultimate effect of this "extreme" grace teaching is to bring the adherents into a state of lawlessness where their lives only reflect what they want not what God wants.

On That Day

There is a day of accounting coming when we will all stand before the Lord [*Romans 12:14*].

2 Corinthians 5:10 NASB

(10) For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, so that each one may be recompensed for his deeds in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad.

This makes it very clear that our reward has a lot to do with what we have done while we are alive. [See [Christian Reward](#) for more on this.]

Jesus also took it a step further in the Sermon on the Mount when He said that even doing good things like miracles didn't qualify us for His Kingdom if our heart wasn't right.

Matthew 7:21-23 NASB

(21) "Not everyone who says to Me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father who is in heaven will enter.

(22) "Many will say to Me on that day, 'Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in Your name, and in Your name cast out demons, and in Your name perform many miracles?'

(23) "And then I will declare to them, 'I never knew you; DEPART FROM ME, YOU WHO PRACTICE LAWLESSNESS.'

The only qualification is obedience—doing the will of the Father. Not being obedient is to practice lawlessness.

John 14:15 NASB

(15) "If you love Me, you will keep My commandments.

John 14:21 NASB

(21) "He who has My commandments and keeps them is the one who loves Me; and he who loves Me will be loved by My Father, and I will love him and will disclose Myself to him."

1 John 2:3-6 NASB

(3) By this we know that we have come to know Him, if we keep His commandments.

(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;

(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:

(6) the one who says he abides in Him ought himself to walk in the same manner as He walked.

The Scriptures are clear. We show our love for Jesus by keeping His commandments. By keeping His word the love of God is perfected in us.

New Covenant Law

Many teach grace in such a way that it sounds as if there is no such thing as “New Testament” law; however, that is not what the Scriptures say.

Romans 8:2 NASB

(2) For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has set you free from the law of sin and of death.

We have been set free from the law of sin and death (Old Testament Law) by the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus (New Testament Law). What does this mean? We need to view this in terms of purpose. The Old Testament Law has a different purpose than the New Testament Law.

Old Testament law CANNOT justify us before God.

Old Testament law CANNOT make us righteous.

Old Testament law CANNOT make us acceptable to God.

All of this was accomplished through Jesus and His atoning sacrifice and has been extended to us through His grace. The purpose of Old Testament law was that sin would increase.

Romans 5:20 NASB

(20) The Law came in so that the transgression would increase; but where sin increased, grace abounded all the more,

The result of the law is also clear:

Galatians 3:23-24 NASB

(23) But before faith came, we were kept in custody under the law, being shut up to the faith which was later to be revealed.

(24) Therefore the Law has become our tutor to lead us to Christ, so that we may be justified by faith.

The Old Testament law serves a purpose until we come to Christ then we are released from the Law.

Romans 7:6 NASB

(6) But now we have been released from the Law, having died to that by which we were bound, so that we serve in newness of the Spirit and not in oldness of the letter.

We have been released from the Law, which dealt with outward performance, and have entered into a new "law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus", which deals with our inward condition of the heart.

Jesus in the Sermon on the Mount [*Matt. 5-7*] states the key elements of the Law and then says "But I say to you" and moves these key elements from outward application to an inward condition of the heart. He didn't nullify them. He actually made them more stringent because they can only be kept through the Spirit and by our being changed and conformed to the image of Christ.

Paul made it clear that it could appear to the Jews that he was acting in a lawless manner but he declared that he was not lawless but instead "under the law of Christ".

1 Corinthians 9:21 NASB

(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.

Application

It is foolish for us to think that the Kingdom of God has no laws. Our God is a God of order and structure which He has established. His Kingdom is no different. Those in the Kingdom will do the will of the Father and will not practice lawlessness. [*Matt. 7:21-23*]. We are to operate by the "law of the Spirit of life in Christ".

New Testament law reflects the character of Christ and as we are changed into His likeness, we naturally walk in these laws because we are walking in the Spirit.

Romans 8:4 NASB

(4) so that the requirement of the Law might be fulfilled in us, who do not walk according to the flesh but according to the Spirit.

This is an example of one of the “universal” spiritual laws given to us by Jesus:

Matthew 23:12 NASB

(12) "Whoever exalts himself shall be humbled; and whoever humbles himself shall be exalted.

There are a number of others but this one is a good example because it can't be obeyed except through the Spirit.

It is time for us to understand that the Lord makes no room for lawlessness in His Kingdom.

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