

1 Timothy

I. Introduction

A. **1 Timothy 1:8-11** . . . But we know that the Law is good, if one uses it lawfully, [9] realizing the fact that law is not made for a righteous person, 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 [10] and immoral men and homosexuals and kidnappers and liars and perjurers, and whatever else is contrary to sound teaching, [11] according to the glorious gospel of the blessed God, with which I have been entrusted.

B. Pray

II. The Law

A. [8] But we know that the **Law** is good, if one uses it lawfully.

1. If you are using a NAS Bible, then you can see that they capitalized the word, Law. Not all Bible translations do this.
2. The NASB does this because, based on the context, they believe that the word Law refers to the Mosaic Law as given in the OT. I agree with them, and so it is this perspective that influences the direction of today's teaching.
3. If you have been around Christians from different denominational backgrounds and theological persuasions, then you know there are various views regarding the Law, how the OT is to be used in relation to salvation, grace, and sanctification, and how the label of legalism is to be used.
 - a. Sadly, some of these views are based on misunderstandings or even distortions of God's word.
4. For example, at some point in church history, the Law, as given in the OT, was tied to legalism, which in turn was tied to the false belief that you could do enough good deeds to earn your salvation. And Christians often label this false belief, "works based salvation."
 - a. The problem with this is the misapplication of the two labels, "legalism" and "works based salvation," because it has resulted in the OT Law being seen as something bad by many Christians.
 - b. Now without question, a works based view of salvation is in direct conflict with what the Word of God teaches about salvation by grace through faith.

- c. And we know this is true because God's word says, "For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God; [9] not as a result of works, so that no one may boast" (**Ephesians 2:8-9**).
 - d. This truth is further clarified in **Titus 3:5-7**, "He saved us, not on the basis of deeds which we have done in righteousness, but according to His mercy, by the washing of regeneration and renewing by the Holy Spirit, [6] whom He poured out upon us richly through Jesus Christ our Savior, [7] so that being justified by His grace we would be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life.
5. In spite of what God's word says, false teachers continue to misrepresent the Biblical requirements for eternal salvation by teaching that the saving work of Jesus Christ is either insufficient or irrelevant.
- a. Those who treat the saving work of Jesus Christ as insufficient add to it by insisting that we must also keep some of the requirements of the OT Law – such as circumcision, or keeping the Sabbath, or keeping certain dietary rules.
 - b. Those who treat the saving work of Jesus Christ as irrelevant believe you can do enough good deeds on your own to offset your sinful deeds, and in so doing be given entrance into heaven.
6. Paul faced this kind of false and misleading teaching about the relationship between the Law and salvation in a number of the churches he established.
- a. Luke records this reality in **Acts 15:1**, "Some men came down from Judea and began teaching the brethren, 'Unless you are circumcised according to the custom of Moses, you cannot be saved.'"
 - b. We know Paul countered this kind of false teaching because we can read about it in several of his letters. For example –
 - (1) **Romans 2:28-29**, "For he is not a Jew (*Christian*) who is one outwardly, nor is circumcision (*baptism*) that which is outward in the flesh. [29] But he is a Jew (*Christian*) who is one inwardly; and circumcision (*baptism*) is that which is of the heart, by the Spirit, not by the letter; and his praise is not from men, but from God."
 - (2) **1 Cor 7:19**, "Circumcision is nothing, and uncircumcision is nothing, but what matters is the keeping of the commandments (*OT Law and NT laws*) of God."

7. Though the NT says we are saved by grace through faith, it also presents requirements for salvation. For example, someone has to pay the penalty we owe for our sin if we are to be saved from having to pay it ourselves.
 - a. Therefore, the first requirement that must be met for our salvation is the redemptive work of Jesus Christ on the cross.
 - b. The second requirement that must be met is God's grace, for He saved us, not on the basis of deeds which we have done, but according to His mercy (**Titus 3:5**). In other words, we don't deserve salvation and God doesn't owe us salvation – which is why our salvation requires grace on His part.
 - c. A third requirement is faith on our part – faith that the saving work of Jesus Christ does free us from the penalty of sin – so that we trust in that and nothing more.
 - d. A fourth requirement for eternal salvation is repentance. God did not sacrifice His son and offer us salvation leading to a reconciled life with Him so that having been freed from the penalty of sin we could continue living a life of selfishness, pride, and sin.
 - (1) As Jesus himself said, "I have not come to call the righteous but sinners to repentance" (**Luke 5:32**).
 - (2) And Paul affirmed the requirement of repentance when he defended his ministry before King Agrippa. We read this in **Acts 26:19-20**, "So, King Agrippa, I did not prove disobedient to the heavenly vision, [20] but kept declaring both to those of Damascus first, and also at Jerusalem and then throughout all the region of Judea, and even to the Gentiles, that they should repent and turn to God, performing deeds appropriate to repentance."
 - e. A fifth requirement for eternal salvation is sanctification. Sanctification is nothing more than dying to self, putting to death your fleshly desires, turning away from worldly desires and practices, and putting Christ-likeness in their place. In other words, sanctification is about the same as keeping the moral parts of the OT Law.
 - (1) The need of sanctification is affirmed in **2 Thessalonians 2:13b**, "...God has chosen you from the beginning for salvation through sanctification by the Spirit and [by] faith in the truth."
 - (2) And **Hebrews 12:14** says, "Pursue peace with all men, and the sanctification without which no one will see the Lord."

- f. The point is that, according to God's word, salvation has requirements, but they are not the kind of requirements the false teachers of Paul's day added in.
 8. In today's Christianity, we face two problems related to this issue.
 - a. The first is similar to what Paul faced. There are those in the church who add requirements to salvation that the Bible doesn't include.
 - b. The second problem is quite different, however. There are a number of Christians who teach or talk as if some of the Biblical requirements for salvation are forms of works based salvation, and therefore to be ignored. And they label any requirement for a personal effort related to sanctification as legalism.
 9. So how did the labels of "works based salvation" and "legalism" come to include the moral parts of the Law, some of the NT requirements for salvation, and the requirement that we must put forth a personal effort to be sanctified?
 - a. I don't know. But I can tell you that many in Christianity are placing the works based salvation label on anything that even slightly appears to invalidate or diminish salvation as a free gift of God's grace given to anyone who professes faith in the saving work of Jesus Christ – even if they don't proceed to make a sincere effort to live according to the word of God.
 - b. The same happens in relation to sanctification. Should someone infer that we must make a planned and deliberate effort to put off sin and the deeds of the flesh and put on Christ-likeness, they are attacked for teaching or promoting a form of legalism.
- B. My purpose in all this is to bring some clarity to a wrong condemnation of the Law, and the misuse of the word "legalism" and the phrase "works based salvation." And I am doing this because in vs 8, Paul clearly states that the Law is good, if one uses it lawfully.
1. So how do we use the Law lawfully? By staying away from using it to either add to or take away from the truths of God's word regarding salvation, sanctification, and any other aspect of the Christian life – such as Bible reading, which Bible translation to read, prayer, fasting, evangelism, church attendance, worship, and the clothes we wear.
 2. As for keeping the Law, it is clear that we have been set free from the ceremonial parts of the Law – such as circumcision, special days, and dietary rules. However, we have not been set free from keeping

- the moral parts of the Law, for it is in keeping them that we are able to love God as we ought and love our neighbor as ourselves.
3. There are a number of scriptures supporting the link between the Law, eternal life, and sanctification. For example –
 - a. **Matthew 5:17-20**, “Do not think that I came to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I did not come to abolish but to fulfill. [18] For truly I say to you, until heaven and earth pass away, not the smallest letter or stroke shall pass from the Law until all is accomplished. [19] Whoever then annuls one of the least of these commandments, and teaches others to do the same, shall be called least in the kingdom of heaven; but whoever keeps and teaches them, he shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven. [20] For I say to you that unless your righteousness surpasses that of the scribes and Pharisees (*it was for show and the praise of men, not for God and the good of others*), you will not enter the kingdom of heaven.”
 - b. **Romans 2:12-13**, “For all who have sinned without the Law will also perish without the Law, and all who have sinned under the Law will be judged by the Law; [13] for it is not the hearers of the Law who are just before God, but the doers of the Law will be justified (*saved*).”
 - c. **Romans 2:25-26**, “For indeed circumcision is of value if you practice the Law; but if you are a transgressor of the Law, your circumcision has become uncircumcision (*is of no value*). [26] So if the uncircumcised man keeps the requirements of the Law, will not his uncircumcision be regarded as circumcision?” (*In other words, will he not be given the gift of eternal life and included in the family of God?*)
 - d. **Romans 13:9-10**, “For this, ‘You shall not commit adultery, you shall not murder, you shall not steal, you shall not covet,’ and if there is any other commandment, it is summed up in this saying, ‘You shall love your neighbor as yourself.’ [10] Love does no wrong to a neighbor; therefore love is the fulfillment of the law.”
 - (1) **Matthew 7:12**, “In everything, therefore, treat people the same way you want them to treat you, for this is the (*summation of the*) Law and the Prophets.”
 - (2) **1 John 3:14**, “We know that we have passed out of death into life, because we love the brethren (*by keeping the Law*). He who does not love abides in death (*is yet unsaved*).”

4. These scriptures speak to the right use of the Law in relation to salvation and sanctification. With these scriptures in mind, let us be careful in how we use the word “legalism” and the phrase “works based salvation” so that we do not misrepresent the word of God, the ways of God, and the requirements of God for salvation, for being reconciled to God, for walking with God, and for living the Christian life.
- C. [9] realizing the fact that law is not made for a righteous person, 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 [10a] and immoral men and homosexuals and kidnappers and liars and perjurers, and whatever else is contrary to sound teaching,
1. Why do we have laws? The obvious answer is to direct and constrain and restrict those who are willing to harm others in how they live. In other words, laws are NOT for those who are doing what is right and good. Why?
 - a. Because those who are doing what is right and good don't need laws to direct or constrain or restrict them.
 - b. The ones who need law are the self-willed, self-ruled, selfish, prideful, arrogant, rebellious, and willful sinners who willingly harm others to do as they please and get what they want.
 2. To confirm this, Paul presents a lengthy – though not exhaustive – list of those who need laws to restrict their bad, sinful, and destructive behavior, and direct them toward good behavior. As we look through this list, try to recall the commandments of God that address these ungodly behaviors.
 - a. The lawless and rebellious (*those who wont submit and those who fight against what is lawful*) (**Leviticus 26:14-33**).
 - b. The ungodly and sinners (*those who intentionally live contrary to God's will and what is in the best interests of others*) (**Psalm 1:5**).
 - c. The unholy and profane (**Leviticus 19:2; 22:32-33**).
 - d. Those who kill their fathers or mothers (**Deuteronomy 5:16**).
 - e. Those who murder (**Deuteronomy 5:17**).
 - f. The (*sexually*) immoral men and homosexuals (**Leviticus 18:22-23; 20:14**),
 - g. The kidnappers (**Exodus 21:16; Deuteronomy 24:7**).
 - h. The liars and perjurers (**Revelation 21:8**).
 - i. and whatever else is contrary to sound teaching

- D. [11] according to the glorious gospel of the blessed God, with which I have been entrusted.
1. The word of God is our only anchored, and therefore unmovable, unchangeable, and always dependable truth.
 2. The wisdom of the world may agree with God's word, here and there, but the world's wisdom does not look to or depend on God's word as its anchored, unmovable, unchangeable, always dependable source of truth.
 - a. Therefore, the world's wisdom changes with the times and from culture to culture.
 - b. Again, it is not as if they never get truth right. The problem is that their truth is not anchored to an immovable, unchangeable object, such as the word of God.

III. Conclusion

- A. Do you treat the OT as the word of God just as much as the NT?
- B. Have you slowly and carefully read through the Law as given in Leviticus and Deuteronomy for the purpose of better understanding God's ways and will for your life?
- C. Is it your aim to keep your thinking, desires, words, and deeds anchored to the word of God?
- D. As Paul says in **2 Timothy 3:16**, "All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness." May we use it this way.