

Why Do We Need the Law?

The law of God existed before man was created. After Adam and Eve sinned this law was arranged and expressed in such a way as to meet man in his fallen condition. Christ gave to Moses religious precepts that were to govern everyday life. History reveals that believers in Christ tried to keep the Ten Commandments in their own strength, unsuccessfully. Have you struggled in this area? We simply can't do this ourselves. Only through the merits of Christ and allowing Him to dwell in us through the Holy Spirit can we succeed. Trying to keep the law in our own strength is called legalism. Legalism will save no one. Is it helpful for us to add commandments to those already in place, in order to help ourselves keep them? No, adding to them does not give us any more power to keep them. So, why do we need the Ten Commandments? We need them so we will see our true condition. In seeing them we realize that our lives are far from what they need to be in order to live in the presence of a holy God. We know that Christ's followers will be keeping all of the Ten Commandments at the Second Coming (Revelation 12:17, 14:12). And this includes not simply the letter of the law, but obedience to the spirit of the law, as well. But, this is completely impossible in our own strength. Even our best efforts are insufficient. "We are all as an unclean thing, and all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags." Isaiah 64:6.

So, how on earth do we do this? We can't keep the law in our own strength. This is the problem. We can't keep it. But we must, and how many of us like to acknowledge that there's something we can't do? So we try and fail miserably. So, what is the solution?

Jesus came here and lived as a man and kept the law perfectly. In His own strength? No, but through the power of the Holy Spirit dwelling in Him. (John 5:19, 30) This is how He lived a perfect life. Jesus took all our sins to Himself and died in our place. This is a wonderful reality, that as we confess and forsake our sins he pardons and empowers us to live godly lives. Christ then placed our sins in the sanctuary in Heaven until they are removed on the Day of Atonement and placed on Satan, the one ultimately responsible for them. Since Jesus died for our sins and takes them from us when we confess them, they are no longer held against us. At this moment in time we are pure, holy. The secret is in our surrendering everything to Christ and giving Him permission to control us. He then empowers us to keep from sinning. He fills us with the Holy Spirit, as He was filled, and we will then keep the law as He kept it through the power of the Holy Spirit in us (perfectly). Since God has given us the power of choice, we, at any moment in time, can choose to take back control. In so doing we also take back all of our past sins that we have previously committed and stand with them on our own. (Ezekiel 3:20) Christ's life only covers our sins as we remain in submission to Him and allow the Holy Spirit to completely control us. One sin, no matter how small, puts all of our past sins right back on us. Why? Because by taking back control and sinning we say that we want sin. If we want sin, then why should Jesus take our past sins and cover them? They are ours, not His, and if we want to sin, then we should carry all of our sins, not just a few of them.

Allow me to ask you a question. If the Holy Spirit is controlling me, can I sin? How only can I sin? Only by taking control back. The Holy Spirit will never cause me to sin. That is why John said in 1 John 3:9 "Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin; for his seed remaineth in him: and he cannot sin, because he is born of God." It is impossible for someone to sin while the seed (Holy Spirit) is in him (in control) because the Holy Spirit will never cause anyone to sin. Then this is key in understanding the way we will succeed in keeping God's Ten Commandments. Anything short of this is futile.

So, what is the Law for? It is God's will for us, not to discourage us with what WE alone must do, but what we may do as Christ works in and through us. We are to look at the Law to see God's standard. It is high and we are insufficient without the power of God, through Christ. If we see we're not keeping it, then we need to more fully surrender, because His Holy Spirit is promised as we humble ourselves before Him.

"The law is not to be looked upon as much from the prohibitory side as from the mercy side. Its prohibitions are the sure guarantee of happiness in obedience. As received in Christ, it works in us the purity of character that will bring joy to us through eternal ages. To the obedient it is a wall of protection. We behold in it the goodness of God... who seeks to shield them from the evils that result from transgression. The law is an expression of God's idea. When we receive it in Christ, it becomes our idea. It lifts us above the power of natural desires and tendencies, above temptations that lead to sin." EG White Letter 96, 1896

In conclusion, the Law is not for me to see how "I" am doing. It is to indicate whether I am totally submitted and surrendered to God, allowing the Holy Spirit to work it out in me. Romans 6:14-18

2 Timothy 2:15