

LAW
OR
GRACE

Copyright 1985,1993,2001,2007
Crossroads Full Gospel
International Ministries

All Rights Reserved.

No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted in any form or by any means, mechanical, photocopied, recorded or otherwise, without the prior permission of the publisher. Short extracts may be used for review purposes.

Except otherwise stated, Bible quotes come from the King James Version. 1611 Elizabethan English is updated in some cases to reflect present terminology, without changing the true meaning of the word.

Extracts from "The Expositor's Study Bible" are identified as E.S.B. Copyright © 2005 Published by, and the sole property of, Jimmy Swaggart Ministries, Baton Rouge, LA, and extracts from the Swaggart Bible Commentary series are identified as S.B.C. Copyright © World Evangelism Press®

Extracts from the Amplified Bible are identified as Amp. Old Testament Copyright © 1962, 1964 by Zondervan Corporation. New Testament Copyright © 1954, 1958, 1987 by The Lockman Foundation.

Extracts from the New International Version are identified as N.I.V. Copyright 1973,1978,1984 by The International Bible Society. Used by permission of Zondervan Publishing House.

Also used: The New Testament: An Expanded Translation (Wuest) translated by Kenneth S. Wuest. Copyright © 1961 by Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., Grand Rapids, Michigan.

Bracketed comments following some scriptures assist the reader in understanding the intended meaning of these verses

We acknowledge the additional works of the various Scholars and Bible Commentaries used in conjunction with the College material. This is not to say that we agree with all their theology, but we certainly value their contribution to the Body of Christ.

Published by:

*Crossroads Publications
10681 Princes Highway
Warrnambool
Victoria 3280
Australia*

CONTENTS

“LAW” OR “GRACE”	1
NATURAL LAW AND SPIRITUAL LAW	7
WHO CONDEMNS ?	11
HOW TO BE SET FREE FROM SIN’S PENALTY	12
GOD’S EMANCIPATION PROCLAMATION	19
THE CROSS IS THE DOOR OF GRACE	20
WHO CURSES ?	23
THE WAY OUT OF BONDAGE	26

“LAW” OR “GRACE”

Christians are saved by grace rather than trying to gain God’s favour through obedience to the Law or the spirit of the Law. Indeed without Christ, we would be lost (John 3:16-18). But while we are saved by grace and are under grace, we still need to conform to God’s righteous standards if we are to live victoriously and please Him. The way to do this is not through willpower but rather through Divine empowerment which causes us to walk in the power of truth.

As we have learned, God’s universal laws and principles are still alive and apply today, both to the saved and the unsaved. And we all need God’s grace to be saved and God’s grace to walk in righteousness, His truth at work in our lives and hearts.

Therefore the question for the Christian still centres around “law and grace”. While God’s Law as such is good, if it is obeyed or we seek to obey it without grace, in other words in our own strength, this becomes a false means by which we are trying to live according to God’s righteous standard. This then brings in the question for the Christian of law or grace. Which is the Christian seeking to live under and by?

Indeed if a Christian wants to please God (this being their true heart intent) and doesn’t properly understand the truths of the message of the Cross (the Atonement), they will ultimately and inevitably seek to function under “law.”

If a Christian does not understand the Cross, then their foundation for doing anything for God will be based on a false premise. Indeed only through an understanding of the Cross, which is found in Romans Ch.6, can a Christian begin to live in “grace” experientially. If we obey by grace and continually rely on God, the very desire to do wrong diminishes.

The faith needed for the Christian to draw on the graces afforded to us through the Cross, can only come to us if we understand and rely on the way faith is developed in us. Therefore:

1. We must know that faith is God-given and that only through the Divine Nature energizing our human nature can we really believe and trust.

2. We must know that faith comes by hearing God's Word and digesting it. The grace of the Divine Nature gives us the Divine energy to believe and trust in this Word - which constitutes faith.

We speak here in regard to God's Word, repentance, the Blood, God's forgiveness, and the "*newness of life*" by which we walk. The prescribed order by which we are to live our lives comes through the Cross. Anything outside of this will result in "law" which will frustrate the grace of God in this New Testament Age of Grace (Galatians 2:21). To frustrate the grace of God is to stop Him from empowering us with His grace because of our intent to self-rule and be self-reliant.

***“. . . If a Christian does not understand
the Cross, then their foundation for
doing anything for God will be
based on a false premise. . . ”***

The intent of many Christians is to please God, but sadly, as we have said, they attempt to do this under "law" and not grace. Anything done under law is done by and through the power of self. Not to understand the Cross, with the Holy Spirit's help of course, means that the Christian cannot draw on God's graces so as to do His will. This can only result in the Christian living his life by self-effort and therefore self-rule, no matter how noble his intentions. This is to frustrate the grace of God - to keep Him and the blessing of His grace at bay.

The proper object of one's faith must be the Cross. Every other object, no matter how seemingly good, if it does not encompass the Cross will frustrate (stop) God's grace, which is to prevent this grace being received in one's life. There is no other road or way. Good works, intellectual study, prayer alone, water baptism, fasting, the sacrificing of time and goods, all if used alone as objects to attract God's attention and favour will cause one to come under law and so to fail in one's most noble ambition.

The Christian whose intention is to please God, will, without grace, always operate under the laws of religion. This must lead the Christian, of course, to an experientially dead life at best in Him.

Yes, saved if in Christ, but dead to the experiential side of grace and so the outworking of “*newness of life*” (Romans 6:3-4).

Indeed concerning our spiritual affairs, we either function under “law” or “grace.” If we are functioning under “law” then, in those areas, we will come under condemnation (judgement) (Romans 4:15).

The result of this condemnation will be that in these areas of law in our self-empowered world of religion, we will frustrate the grace of God - that is, we will block Him from doing what He wants to do as our loving Heavenly Father (Galatians 2:21).

You see where there is “law,” there is no room for anything else, for the Christian is “full up” in that area of their life. We, with God’s help, must be emptied of self and allow God to fill us with His graces, including the power that comes through His Divine Nature and His Word. However if we have religion, or have turned our faith into formulas, thereby making it a religion, then a position of “law” results. This is because religion always works in “law,” otherwise known as self-effort.

One writer comments concerning this subject: “*Whereas the effect of law is condemnation, the action of grace is “justification.”*”

The doctrine of justification by works generates religious pride - that of Justification by Faith produces contrition and humility. In the matter of Justification, Faith and works are opposite and irreconcilable - as opposed as Grace and Debt. Since God declares ungodly men righteous, works cannot in any sense furnish a ground for Justification, and hence the first step toward Salvation on the part of a sinner is to humble himself and accept the Divine pronouncement that he is “ungodly.” . . .

Regrettably, the vast majority of mankind accepts the human doctrine of salvation by merit; a very small minority believes the Divine Doctrine of Salvation by Grace. As the Lord Jesus Himself said, few tread that narrow way. It is abhorrent to human pride.”¹

(underlines added)

“ . . . The Christian whose intention is to please God, will, without grace, always operate under the laws of religion. . . ”

This same principle applies in regard to works. Because the Cross is not involved, those works done in the power of self alone will never please God or bring victory into our lives. Therefore man's works, no matter how good or well intentioned these may be, cannot be deemed "good" or "acceptable" in a spiritual sense.

When man looks for God's favour in the doing of good works alone, even though it is "good" to do them, it does not gain approval from God. This is because man is seeking credit for his self-effort, and is not giving credit to anyone else for he has done it himself. This in fact is self-reliance and comes under the "law of works," for while these works are "good" they are not "Godly," and so are of no eternal value.

To the natural mind such works may appear altruistic, certainly good, for example to help one's fellow man in need. However, God's Word tells us that we are first to love our fellow man (Matthew 22:37-39), not just meet his natural need. This love, if we are to follow God's prescribed order, must be a Godly love, "agape love," and we can only love like this if we:

1. Are in Christ
2. Understand the Cross
3. Come to faith in the Cross (the Atonement) and what it has afforded
4. Receive the empowerment of the Divine Nature to love as God loves.

All the "doing" in the world to try and help our fellowman will not replace our responsibility to love him. God has said in His Word that we must love both Him and our fellowman. Only when we do this can we please God. Of course God would not ask us to do something we cannot do. We are able to love in the way God wants us to love only in Christ as we yield to the Holy Spirit and allow Him to fill us and energize us with His graces.

Returning to the distinction between law and grace, another example can be seen in the Saint who has sin in their life. After realizing they are doing wrong, they manage to stop sinning, after much struggle, by willpower.

However while to cease doing this wrong is good, it does not deal with the spiritual side of the sin. In order for any sin in a Saint's life to be dealt with in accordance with God's Word, the Blood must

first be applied (through repentance) so that grace can then be received.

If this is not done, the Saint will live under “law” and its penalty. Just stopping the sin is not the end of law. The arm of the flesh (willpower) cannot deal with a spiritual problem, for only God’s grace can deal with it completely. Only the Blood of the Cross can afford us this grace that deals with sin completely and brings us under “grace,” even the forgiveness of sins.

***“...The arm of the flesh (willpower)
cannot deal with a spiritual problem,
for only God’s grace can deal
with it completely. . .”***

The process begins when we allow ourselves to be humbled under the mighty hand of God (James 4:10; 1 Peter 5:6). Then through His Anointing, we encounter the power of truth that not only brings conviction to the heart but also the knowledge of this forgiveness. As we respond to God’s conviction power, we will repent and put our sin under the Blood of the Cross to be forever obliterated (1 John 1:9; Ephesians 1:7; Psalm 103:12).

God’s grace orders our life or comes into our life through God-given faith. Only in Christ, as we absorb the graces of the Divine Nature with a proper focus in regard to God’s truth, wisdom and will, can we live in this higher order to which Christ has given the Saint access through the Cross.

To understand what the Cross has done for us and what it has afforded us, we must, with the help of the Holy Spirit:

1. Seek God’s Word and will in regard to the Cross
2. Find God’s Word and will in regard to the Cross
3. Embrace God’s Word and will in regard to the Cross, e.g.

Romans 6:11.

However we must know that in order to partake fully of the graces of the Divine Nature:

1. The Saint’s intentions must be God-created
2. The Saint’s motive must be God-given (pure)
3. The Saint’s steps must be God-directed.

In other words, everything that is good or holy or righteous within we who are in Christ has already been placed there by the Lord Himself. Our responsibility is to yield - His is to supply us with grace and empowerment. Then the glory goes to Him and Him alone. Amen.

Ways of operating in “law” therefore involve:

- (a) Using willpower alone to do right. This is to do things, to try to please God, in our own strength.
- (b) Formularizing God’s do’s and don’ts - in other words His principles or His Word - so that our faith is turned into a religion in these areas. This is to use religious works to try to please God.

The Saint, to please God and reach his potential, must not only identify with Christ, but in all that he does he must identify in Christ. Positional salvation is not the goal but it is the gateway to conditional (experiential) salvation. The first is salvation from hell; the second is salvation from self. Only by experientially being in Christ can we know the joy and power of God’s strength which enables us to say “yes” to His way, will and Word. All this amounts to us living our life not by obedience to “law” but by God’s “grace” afforded to us through the Cross. And to live under grace will cause us not to break God’s laws.

***“. . .Positional salvation is not the goal
but it is the gateway to conditional
(experiential) salvation. The first is
salvation from hell; the second is
salvation from self. . .”***

On a practical level, to live under grace is to acknowledge God in all our ways (Proverbs 3:5-6), so that we can order our lives by His direction and through His empowerment. In this we must serve God first, not man, for outside His empowering grace we cannot obtain merit. This is, in fact, to live by law, seeking to please God by our own efforts. In fact we sin when we don’t submit to God first,

for then self-rule gains ascendancy. And remember that we cannot serve two masters, the Lord and ourselves.

The Lord desires that we seek Him continually, desiring His direction and His will to be done in our lives. We also seek Him to ask for His enablement at a holy level so that we will not frustrate the grace of God (Galatians 2:21). As we have said, this means that we stop God from doing what He wants to do in our lives by preventing Him from bestowing His grace upon us.

As we acknowledge the Lord in all our ways and seek to put Him first in everything we do, we develop our relationship with Him and learn greater levels of trust. This is to function under grace not law, not seeking to please Him through works but according to His direction and empowerment. As a result we can then give God the glory for whatever fruit is manifested in and through our lives. This is the way of the Cross, this is the harvest and the outcome of the Spirit-led life (Romans 8:1). Amen and amen!

NATURAL LAW AND SPIRITUAL LAW

Paul speaks again of “law” in his epistle to Timothy:

1 TIMOTHY 1:9 *Knowing this, that the law (law in general) is not made for a righteous man, but for the lawless and disobedient, for the ungodly and for sinners, for unholy and profane, for murderers of fathers and murderers of mothers, for manslayers (murderers),*

1 TIMOTHY 1:10 *For whoremongers (fornicators), for those who defile themselves with mankind (homosexuals), for menstealers (slave traders), for liars, for perjured persons (those who give false testimony), and if there be any other thing that is contrary to sound doctrine (from the Word of God)*

Because the conscience is not an infallible guide to moral living, the written moral law of God is needed to give us exact boundaries in which to live. In Christ, as we have learned, we also have access to the power to live according to these standards. (**Note:**

In Christ we have been legally transferred from the position of “law-breaker” to the position of “law-keeper.”)

“. . . In Christ we have been legally transferred from the position of “law-breaker” to the position of “law-keeper.” . . .

Verse 9 appears to refer to law in general, whose purpose is not to deal with Godly men but the unrighteous - or rebellious Believers. Here Paul is making the point that the law in general is also good. It is in place to protect society, to give the boundaries in which man must live, to deter people from violating its rules and decrees, and to punish criminals. The law also functions to satisfy justice and to bring a righteous standard into society. This is the value of the law. It will produce peace and order when adhered to, and its penalties constitute a deterrent for all those who would violate its standards.

In fact we as Christians are encouraged by Paul to submit to the laws of the land and the governing authorities who are placed in position to order and regulate society (Romans 13:1-7). Those who break society’s laws become subject to the due penalty - for the ruler (or authority) *“bears not the sword in vain”* and will *“execute wrath upon him that does evil.”* Jesus, when challenged by the disciples of the Pharisees, also supported obedience to lawful government in the form of paying prescribed taxes (Matthew 22:17-21), a raging debate in Israel at the time.

It is the same in the spiritual realm. If we as Christians sin, then we have broken God’s Law, and have placed ourselves into bondage (under the law of sin and death in that area) to some degree. In other words, through sinning we allow the sin nature, formerly decommissioned, to roar back into life and sit on the throne of our heart again in that area of sin. And like cancer, sin, if not dealt with quickly, will consume other parts of our life. Sin gives the enemy legal ground to afflict us - to legally damage part of our spiritual property, or deprive us of some of our rights and privileges in Christ - for this is the wage of sin.

ROMANS 6:23 For the wages of sin is death. . .

ROMANS 6:16 Know you not, that to whom you yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants you are to whom you obey (as Christians we can be a slave, translated here as “servant,” to the sin nature or to Christ); whether of sin (a slave to the sin nature and the enemy) unto death (darkness or bondage in that area of sin), or of obedience (through the empowerment of the Divine Nature) unto righteousness?

So in that area of sin, we come under the penalty of the law of sin and death and become slaves to that bondage.

The degree of punishment (the evil or judgement allowed) will depend on the degree of sin.

“ . . . So in that area of sin, we come under the penalty of the law of sin and death and become slaves to that bondage. . . ”

If we sin, we can repent and believe for cleansing according to our Covenant in Christ (1 John 1:9). It was He Who paid the penalty of the law of perfect justice, satisfying all its demands through His Blood sacrifice (Hebrews 9:22). As a result, we need only repent and believe the Lord for forgiveness in order to once again come into rightstanding with God. Christ paid the price for all the sins of mankind, and we receive forgiveness through faith in Him and His finished work. This is the message of the Cross - which always brings the yielded sinner (saved or unsaved) to restoration. To seek forgiveness through repentance is to appropriate the righteous provision of the Lord and to glorify Him Who has already paid the price. Therefore we should always come quickly to the throne of grace to receive what is needed (Hebrews 4:16). This is to please the Father and to honour Him.

As we goal to “observe to do all” that God commands in His Word on a daily basis, and are led and empowered by the Spirit of Truth, we will not be subject to any penalty of the law of sin and death (the curse - Deuteronomy 28:15-68). This is because we are

not placing ourselves under the law of sin and death, but coming instead under the Law of Life in Christ Jesus.

This law is one of liberty, “the law of liberty in Christ Jesus,” and it is diametrically opposed to “the law of sin and death.” Only

ROMANS 8:2 For the Law (that which we are about to give is a Law of God, devised by the Godhead in eternity past [1 Peter 1:18-20]; this Law, in fact, is “God’s Prescribed Order of Victory” : E.S.B.) of the Spirit of Life (liberty) in Christ Jesus has made me free (given me freedom and victory) from the law of sin and death (and its penalties - only the Law of Liberty in Christ is stronger than the law of sin and death).

The law that Paul speaks of here (the Law of the Spirit of Life) is not the Mosaic Law, but rather a law “*devised by the Godhead*,” within which the Spirit works. This law only operates for those in Christ, which means it became alive to man (both positionally and conditionally) through and because of what Jesus did at the Cross. By inheritance we, as Christians are able to come under the benefits of this law. However when we sin we are exposed to the penalties of the law of sin and death to varying degrees. In relation to the liberty of the Law of Life, the Holy Spirit works within the guidelines of the “finished work of Christ.”

The most severe penalty of the law of sin and death is, of course, death - eternal separation from God. We who remain in Christ, however, have been freed from this ultimate penalty (Romans 8:1).

“. . . This law is one of liberty, “the law of liberty in Christ Jesus,” and it is diametrically opposed to “the law of sin and death.” . . .

Note: In the world today, we can call upon the law of the land and its enforcer, the police, to apprehend anyone who is unlawfully damaging our property. It is the same in the spiritual world. We, as Christians, can, by faith, call upon God (our enforcer), according to His Word, to protect us when evil tries to afflict us “unlawfully” (i.e. when we have not sinned and given our enemy legal ground to do

so). This is why the Word of God tells us to be watchful, knowing our adversary prowls around as a roaring lion, seeking those he may devour (1 Peter 5:8). We are also warned to put on our armour so that we may stand against the schemes and deceits of the devil (Ephesians 6:11). We should therefore stand in faith, and resist all his attempts to try to afflict us unlawfully.

WHO CONDEMNS ?

Background Reading: John 3:16-18

God does not condemn. Rather, He will try to expose any wrongdoing which is in our life. He does this by convicting us of sin and urging us to repent. Every person born into this world is given a lifetime to repent of the sin that keeps them separated from God, a lifetime to turn back to Him through His Son Jesus.

1 TIMOTHY 2:4 (God) ***Who will have all men to be saved (none are excluded, Jesus died for all), and to come unto the knowledge of the truth (the way of salvation through His Son Jesus Christ - Romans 10:9-10).***

We condemn ourselves to varying degrees when we reject God's Word, either knowingly or unknowingly. Scripture tells us that it is not the Lord Who condemns us:

JOHN 3:17 ***For God sent not His Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through Him might be saved (however if we reject Him, we condemn ourselves).***

HOSEA 4:6 ***My people (Christians) are destroyed (go into bondage) for lack of knowledge (through not properly seeking God's truths): because you have rejected knowledge (even through slackness - not bothering to find out), I will also reject you (be unable to protect you). . .***

“...We condemn ourselves to varying degrees when we reject God’s Word, either knowingly or unknowingly. . .”

God has provided the way to freedom for all those who seek it. So it pays to be acquainted with God’s boundaries and then to live within them by His power. This is wise, for the wage of living in knowledge and wisdom is “the peace of God (in our lives) which passes all understanding” (Philippians 4:7). We who live on the highway of life are responsible for finding out the road rules in order to survive and have peace (with our God).

HOW TO BE SET FREE FROM SIN’S PENALTY

By the Mosaic Law the people in Old Testament times became aware of sin as transgression (open rebellion against God’s laws). But the Mosaic Law could not provide any means by which man could be separated from the state of sin, and therefore any way back to God for the sinner. So man remained in the fallen spiritual state of death, separated from God under the penalty of the law of sin and death. Furthermore the Mosaic Law could provide no means, no power by which the people of God in Old Testament times could walk in righteousness and overcome the domination of the sin nature. The Law could only identify sin and cover it by the atoning animal sacrifices, not deal with its power directly. Only the death of a sinless man and the shedding of His precious Blood could pay the price to bring man to a position where he can overcome sin.

Now under the New Testament or New Covenant, those who are in Christ are set free from the law of sin and death and all its penalties. This legal position can also become an experiential one as we are led by the Holy Spirit and empowered by God’s grace.

ROMANS 8:1 There is therefore now no condemnation (guilt) to those who are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh (by self-rule, self-effort, etc.), but after the Spirit (to do the will of God in every area of our lives).

GALATIANS 5:16 This I say then, Walk (ordering your behaviour) ***in the Spirit*** (yielding to God and believing for His grace to give empowerment), ***and you shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh*** (the corrupt desires of the sin nature).

ROMANS 8:12 Therefore, brethren (Paul is speaking to Saints), ***we are debtors*** (to Christ for He has paid our debt), ***not to the flesh to live after the flesh*** (to live by self-rule, in our own strength).

ROMANS 8:13 For if you live after the flesh (in carnality and self-effort), ***you shall die*** (have no victory): ***but if you through the Spirit*** (by His power) ***do mortify the deeds of the body*** (this is the only way to overcome the flesh), ***you shall live*** (walk in victory and bring glory to God).

There is therefore no condemnation in the life of the Christian who is led by the Spirit, which includes, of course, being led by the logos (written) Word and the rhema (revealed) Word. Indeed such a person is able to identify every wrong desire the flesh promotes. When the flesh rises up with its evil tendencies, the awareness of wrong intent and desire will come to us through a renewed mind (educated spirit) or the prompting of the Holy Spirit. It is then our choice to yield to the Spirit or our flesh.

Note: The law of sin and death, in regard to the positional righteousness of a Saint, finds nothing to condemn. The law of sin and death, on an experiential level, finds nothing to condemn in the person who is led and empowered by the Spirit.

As we will to obey God, then yield to the Holy Spirit, He will empower us, through the graces of His Divine Nature, to overcome sin and walk in righteousness. The choice, however, lies with each of us as to which we will yield to, moment by moment. The more we develop the habit of responding to the Spirit's direction and not the dictates of the flesh, the more this will become an habitual way of life. However if we do the contrary, the reverse will occur. So inevitably it is our decision as to whether we follow the Spirit and walk in freedom, or the flesh and suffer bondage and loss.

“...The more we develop the habit of responding to the Spirit’s direction and not the dictates of the flesh, the more this will become an habitual way of life. . .”

Paul states in Galatians that if we are led by the Spirit, we are not under the Law:

GALATIANS 5:18 But if you be led of the Spirit, you are not under the Law (in fact any law).

Here Paul is referring to all law including the Mosaic Law, for we are not under the Law of Moses, or any other form of legalism, as a means of obtaining righteousness, or indeed, pleasing God. In fact, as we know, this is impossible.

Note: In his letter to the Galatian churches, Paul is presenting a teaching in which he tried to correct the serious doctrinal error that the Judaizers, who had infiltrated the church in this region, had brought in.

Paul is also reminding the Galatians that although they were required to live a Godly life and were not to “*fulfill the lust of the flesh*” (Galatians 5:16), they were also not to embrace any form of legalism. This had been one of the failings of the Galatian churches, to become ensnared by those who taught them that they must obey the “letter” of the Mosaic Law as a means of trying to gain favour with God (e.g. through circumcision). Thus Paul exhorts them to stand fast in their liberty and not to become entangled again in “*the yoke of bondage*” (Galatians 5:1). Inevitably, their strong stance on turning to the Mosaic Law as a means of justification, as taught to them by Judaizers, would have resulted in them falling from the grace of justification by faith (Galatians 5:4).

For Christians intent on yielding to the Holy Spirit, “*The letter of the Law is now their helper, no longer their absolute rigid rule; as a rule it is superseded by the law written in the heart (2 Corinthians 3:6-11; Hebrews 8:8-11). As Chrysostom writes in his note on the present passage, “They are raised to a height far above the Law’s injunction.”*”²

The belief in licence, or excessive fleshly freedom because we are under grace, was also encountered by Paul and firmly rejected by him as a valid Christian pathway. This is to completely misunderstand grace by which we are both saved and empowered to live a Godly life. Grace does not give us licence to sin so that grace may abound, as Paul queries in Romans 6:1 and answers his own question in the next verse. We were saved from sin, not to return to it but to live righteously by Divine empowerment.

ROMANS 6:15 *What then? (This presents Paul going back to the first question he asked in this Chapter.) shall we sin, because we are not under the Law, but under Grace? (If we think such a thing, then we're completely misunderstanding Grace. The Grace of God gives us the liberty to live a Holy life, which we do through Faith in Christ and the Cross, and not licence to sin as some think.) God forbid (every true Believer hates sin; so the idea of living under its dominion is abhorrent to say the least!). (E.S.B.)*

TITUS 2:11 *For the grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men (is available to all, not only certain ones as the false doctrine of predestination teaches)*

TITUS 2:12 *Teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world (this can be done if we do it God's way)*

The Christian life is not to be one of either legalism or licence. It is to be a life of faith, love and obedience, and of allowing ourselves to be led and empowered by the Holy Spirit. Then as we walk according to the Spirit, we will not come under the law of sin and death (will receive no condemnation - Romans 8:1), we will not be subject to legalism or dead works (Galatians 5:18) and we will not fulfill fleshly lusts (Galatians 5:16).

“...The Christian life is not to be one of either legalism or licence. It is to be a life of faith, love and obedience, and of allowing ourselves to be led and empowered by the Holy Spirit. . .”

In the modern Pentecostal Church, it is a sad fact that many are turning their so-called “faith” into another law. What we mean by this is that Believers are using formulas as a basis for their works in order to gain favour with God so that His power and blessing may come upon them as a guaranteed benefit. Much of this reliance upon formulas is promoted in terms of the “prosperity doctrine” and concerns material wealth. For example, if the Christian gives a certain amount of money into some aspect of the Lord’s work, then He is obligated to give a return on their investment of another guaranteed amount. If this is our focus then the Cross is not our focus, and we will be unbalanced in our Christian walk, lacking power, wisdom and Holy Spirit direction. Only by yielding to the Holy Spirit can we please God and be empowered to serve Him, on His terms not ours. God’s arm will not be twisted by formulas or us “wresting” the scriptures to suit our own desires and self-interest.

JAMES 4:7 Submit yourselves (yield every area) therefore to God. Resist the devil (in faith), and he will flee from you.

JAMES 4:8 Draw near to God (seek His face), and He will draw near to you . . .

Notice that this scripture tells us we must first submit to God before we can resist the devil in the power of the Divine Nature. Then the next verse says “*Draw near to God, and He will draw near to you.*” There is no other way to defeat sin except through being in Christ and being empowered by the Spirit. Through us drawing “near” to God, the enemy may have come against us one way, but he will flee from us “seven ways” in disarray (Deuteronomy 28:7). The Lord is, as we “draw near,” our Protector, Provider, Comforter, and the One Who leads us in His ways of righteousness. Hallelujah.

In Christ, and as we allow ourselves to be led by the Spirit, we die to the law of sin and death. We do this through our actions of faith, by nailing our sin to the Cross through repentance, firstly at salvation. Then as sin subsequently appears in our lives, we must put it under the Blood through repentance.

The penalty of the law of sin and death can only have authority over us **AS LONG AS WE ARE ALIVE TO IT.** (This general principle is shown in Paul's illustration in Romans 7:1-4.) And we remain alive to the law of sin and death by yielding to the dictates of the sin nature, either ignorantly or willfully. Also, if we do not deal with known sin by putting it under the Blood of the Lamb, then we become alive to this law and its penalties in that area of sin. In other words, Christians' sins are not automatically dealt with. We need to acknowledge our sin and repent before the Blood can do its work. These are the terms of our Covenant in God, e.g. 1 John 1:9.

“...The penalty of the law of sin and death can only have authority over us AS LONG AS WE ARE ALIVE TO IT...”

The way to die to every penalty of the law of sin and death is to reject anything not of God, and anything which does not line up with His Word, and to believe on God's Covenant that He has established with us through the Blood of His Son. We have been legally separated from the law of sin and death, and the sin nature is legally disengaged. Let us strive with the help of the Holy Spirit to make this legal position an experiential one also, whereby we know the reality of this freedom in our lives.

The penalty of the law cannot legally apply to us (keep us under the authority of darkness) in any area if we put all sin under the Blood, then renew our minds with the Word of God and purpose to act willingly in faith on that renewal in the power of the Spirit. Once again this is encapsulated in the phrase, “being led by the Spirit.”

ROMANS 12:1 *I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you (all Christians) present (dedicate, yield) your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God (by taking up the cross of self-denial and continuing in God's Word), which is your reasonable service.*

ROMANS 12:2 *And be not conformed to this world (and its ways): but be transformed (changed) by the renewing of your mind (the way you think), that you may prove (and know for yourself) what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God.*

In doing this, with God's grace at work in us, we can be set free from the enemy's influence in every area of our lives. Therefore as we fellowship with God and seek truth, the truth will set us free by the power of God. This is evidenced in scripture:

JOHN 8:31 *Then said Jesus to those Jews who believed on Him, "If you continue in My Word, then are you My Disciples indeed;*

JOHN 8:32 *And you shall know the Truth, and the Truth shall make you free (this is the secret of all abundant Life in Christ; the "Truth" is "Jesus Christ and Him Crucified," which alone is the answer to the problems of Man). (E.S.B.)*

JOHN 8:36 *If the Son (Jesus Christ) therefore shall make you free, you shall be free indeed (a freedom which the world cannot give, and in fact doesn't even understand : E.S.B.).*

Wuest enlightens us and gives us a good understanding of these promises in his explanation of Romans 6:12-14:

ROMANS 6:12 *Let not sin (the sin nature) therefore reign in your mortal body, that you should obey it in the lusts thereof.*

ROMANS 6:13 *Neither yield your members as instruments of unrighteousness unto sin: but yield yourselves unto God, as those who are alive from the dead (raised with Christ in newness of life), and your members as instruments of righteousness unto God.*

ROMANS 6:14 *For sin (the sin nature) shall not have dominion over you: for you are not under the Law, but under grace.*

GOD'S EMANCIPATION PROCLAMATION

“A literal translation of Romans 6:12–14 is as follows: “Therefore, stop letting sin rule constantly as king in your bodies which are subject to death, resulting in your habitual obedience to its cravings. Neither keep on habitually putting your members at the service of sin as weapons of unrighteousness. But put yourselves once for all at the service of God, as those who are living ones out from among the dead, and put your members once for all at the service of God as weapons of righteousness, for sin shall not have dominion over you, for you are not under law but under grace.”

The word studies are as follows: In verse twelve, the Greek construction in the exhortation forbids the continuance of a habit already going on. Those believers before salvation had been constantly allowing sin to reign over their bodies. The word “reign” is from a word which refers to a king reigning. The prepositional phrase could show either purpose or result. This preposition often means the latter, and we have so translated it. The word “lust” has changed its meaning since the Authorized Version was made. It refers today to an immoral desire. The Greek word refers simply to a desire, and has a preposition prefixed which intensifies the meaning, thus, a craving. The context rules as to whether it is an evil or a good desire.

In verse thirteen, the first exhortation is in the same construction as in verse twelve, forbidding the continuance of an action already going on. The word “yield” is from a word which means “to put at the service of,” as a volunteer placing himself at the service of this government or an individual at the service of a master. The word “instruments” is from a Greek word which means, “tools or instruments, a ship’s tackle, implements of war.” It is used in John

18:3 in the last sense. Our members, namely, our eyes, hands, feet, mind, are weapons which either Satan or God may use. This at once brings to mind the conception of two armies, Satan's and God's. When a saint puts his members at the service of Satan, he fights against God and His army, which is a serious thing. The second exhortation in verse thirteen is in a construction which exhorts to a once-for-all act. We are to put ourselves and our members at the service of God once for all. Having done that we must keep hands off. We are bought with a price, and we are not our own. We must daily, yes, hourly, count ourselves as having thus put ourselves into the hands of God for His service.

“...We must daily, yes, hourly, count ourselves as having thus put ourselves into the hands of God for His service. . .”

In verse fourteen we have the promise, that having done this, sin shall no longer have lordship over us. This is God's emancipation proclamation. The definite article before the word “law,” does not appear in the Greek. The absence of the article gives the idea that Christians are not under the law as a method of divine dealing. That is, we are not unsaved persons upon whom the law makes demands that no unsaved person can ever meet, for the law commands to obedience but gives neither the desire nor the power to obey. But we are under grace as a method of divine dealing, for grace sweetly exhorts to a life of obedience and provides both the desire and the power to obey (Philippians 2:12–13).”³

(underlines added)

Everything has been provided so that we may walk in the freedom Christ won for us at the Cross. It is we who must choose to allow the truth to set us free by committing ourselves to it.

THE CROSS IS THE DOOR OF GRACE

We have said that if we walk according to the Spirit we will not come under condemnation, we will not be subject to legalism or dead works and we will not fulfill fleshly lusts. But we can go one step

further and state that if the Christian does not go through the door of grace daily, then in their dealings with their so-called faith, they will revert to law. It may not be the Law of Moses but nevertheless, it will be law - trying to do good in God's eyes according to one's knowledge of God's Word but by human strength and willpower. Again, without going through Calvary's gate at the start of every day to be empowered to run the race God has set before us, we will fail to do God's will and live in His power.

There is no other way to live life except by going daily through these gates which give entry to the throneroom (Hebrews 4:16). Living according to formulas based on law is no way for a Christian to live. In fact then law governs one's life instead of grace. We are to remember at all times that we are to live by grace through faith - there is simply no other way.

If we are living under the bondage of law, then the sin nature will once again gain ascendancy, roaring back into life and deceiving us by our so-called "good intentions." And when we obey God's laws in the flesh, all that will happen is that we will become religious like the Pharisees and no better than they were in the way we live our life - except that Christ has given us eternal life.

***“. . .Again, without going through
Calvary's gate at the start of every day to
be empowered to run the race God has
set before us, we will fail to do God's will
and live in His power. . .”***

No matter how much we pray, read our Bible, study the scriptures, fast, go to church or give of ourselves in time and resources, nothing will replace God's prescribed order. This is of course His grace at work in us so that we do His will by His power. So yes we will do all these things and more, but the difference is this - it will be in His strength as His Divine Nature enmeshes with our human nature. Then we will have a clear divinely inspired purpose, all this because we have been raised with Christ!

We will not come to God with our ideas and ask Him to bless them. We will go to God first to receive His will for our lives in all areas. Then we can thank Him for His blessing as we yield daily to

the Holy Spirit as our Guide and the Provider of all good things, including faith to run the race.

Without this Holy Spirit order in our lives, the sin nature will affect our thinking and we will be directed along paths that can only end up in darkness and defeat - with us forever going in circles like the unbelieving Israelites in the wilderness who never reached the Promised Land.

We were not birthed at Calvary to fail but rather to succeed in Christ so that God's will can be done on this earth through us, the New Testament Church. Let us not therefore be governed by law, but rather, let us allow God to be God in us and through us, so that all the glory will belong to Him.

Living in His grace will cause us to keep His holy standards that constitute His Law. Again the only way for the Christian to live is by grace through faith. Again, anyone who is not living this way will experience defeat in the areas concerned.

Law has its place but must never replace grace. God's Laws are good but it is God's grace that affords us the faith and passion to live according to these laws. So again, summing it up, it is not law that should govern our lives even though we should do what the Law of God says. Rather it is by the grace given to us at Calvary that we should live our lives, day by day. It is this Holy Spirit given grace and this grace alone that should empower and direct our lives - day by day, hour by hour and even minute by minute.

Therefore it is only those in Christ who are yielding to the Spirit of Grace who can progress in their Christian walk. It is He who will take us on into the Promised Land of God's will for our lives. He will not leave us in the wilderness to roam around in circles, blinded by ignorance and unbelief. The Spirit will bring us to the table of the Father to taste of the Divine riches that will empower our soul and cause our feet to dance to the tune set by God. No worldly or fleshly want will sway us as we lean not on our understanding or the wisdom of the world but rather on the unsearchable riches of God's Word, both logos and rhema. It is by this source that we should order our life, knowing that God will supply the grace that will empower us at every level within our makeup to live in the righteousness that He has set before us - in other words, His will!

***“...The Spirit will bring us to the table
of the Father to taste of the Divine riches
that will empower our soul and cause our
feet to dance to the tune set by God. . .”***

So as far as we are concerned, God's will is our law and the Spirit is the Giver of all grace so that we can live life in abundance, as Jesus said. Only through Calvary, through our risen Lord, can this abundance be evidenced in the life of the Christian. The power to live the saved life has been given, but sadly not all have received this power. Yes people are saved but have not gone on to progress in the Christian faith. They exist in Christ but are not living with Christ and in Christ at an experiential level. To do so is to recognize the Cross as the doorway of grace, and that we have a daily need to connect with the Father so that this grace by which we are led and empowered can be experienced, for our sake and the sake of others.

WHO CURSES ?

Background Reading: Deuteronomy 11:26-28

Many who are ignorant of the love of God and the nature of God interpret unforeseen negative circumstances as God punishing either themselves or others. Sometimes such events are merely unfortunate accidents, and in any case, God does not curse in this way - but man places himself under a curse when he draws away from the Light or does not bother to find and embrace it.

It is not God Who keeps a sinner under the curse. Rather, it is man who leaves himself under the law's penalties by choosing to remain in sin. Briefly, to be under a curse is to be either devoid of God's protection in certain areas of one's life (which allows evil to enter), or to experience some form of lack in one's life, whether this be spiritual, physical or mental. Therefore a curse can manifest itself in two ways:

1. As hurt to man or damage to his property, or that over which he is a steward.

2. This can be extended to continual lack in one's life, including the lack of God's empowerment (grace).

It is important we realize that it is not God who places a curse upon man. Rather, it is man who places himself (and sometimes his children) under a curse by engaging in sin or associating with sin and its master without true repentance (1 Peter 5:8; John 10:10; Deuteronomy 11:26-28).

Thus, for example, we see third world countries which are beset with poverty, strife and famine. These countries come under the curse because for centuries their people have worshipped false gods. We in the western world are plagued with less obvious manifestations of the curse, e.g. alcoholism, abortion, suicide, drug addiction, psychiatric illness, divorce, escalating crime rates, etc. This is because many people in western countries have turned aside from any reverence for God and His laws, and as a consequence our societies suffer the rewards or wages of sin.

Remember we are either under law and its penalties (through sin), or under grace and its empowerment (through faith). Even ignorance will place us at times under the law's curse (Isaiah 5:13). Christ has redeemed us from its curse, but our focus must be us in Christ and He in us, empowering us to believe and trust and obey. We in Christ are not meant to come under the penalty of the law in any area, for He has paid the price. The penalty of the law has been paid in full. We are legally in this position, but to experience this freedom, we must choose to leave behind the darkness of sin in each and every area. The Spirit will lead us out of every bondage to sin as we yield to Him, believing God's Word as co-heirs with Christ, and seeking the necessary grace.

***“ . . . It is important we realize that it is
not God who places a curse
upon man. . . ”***

We can therefore see that God, in His love, allows man to choose his own destiny of life or death (victory or bondage) in each and every area of his life. And as people choose to come under God's Covenant and obey His righteous laws, they will reap blessing

instead of the curse, and victory instead of bondage. All this is possible because of the Great Exchange that took place at Calvary - the righteous One paying the price and receiving the punishment due to the guilty.

Christians keep God out of their lives in the areas in which they allow sin to reign. In allowing the sin nature to be enthroned in areas, they are denying God and His power access to them. Therefore such Christians are powerless in these areas because they have given them over to the sin nature and the enemy.

ROMANS 6:16 Know you not (Christians), that to whom you yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants (the word means “slaves”) you are to whom you obey; whether of sin (the sin nature) unto death (defeat and bondage), or of obedience (God’s way) unto righteousness (victory and peace)?

JOHN 8:34 Jesus answered them, “Verily, verily, I say unto you, Whosoever commits sin is the servant of sin (is in bondage and is not free).”

However, Christians who are walking in faith (and empowerment) according to God’s Word and will in their lives will not come under the penalty of the law of sin and death in any area. It is only when Christians step outside the protection of God’s Word and will by breaking a law (sinning by disobeying God) that they open the door for evil (and thus bondage) to enter that area of their lives. Note however that the degree of sin will determine the degree of bondage.

An example of this can be seen in 2 Kings 18:11-12. Here we see that the Israelites were taken captive by their enemy the King of Assyria because they had transgressed the Covenant they had made with God.

2 KINGS 18:11 And the King of Assyria (an enemy of Israel) did carry away (deport) Israel (Israel being a type-pattern of Christians) unto Assyria (describes the fall of the Northern Kingdom) . . .

This happened:

2 KINGS 18:12 *Because they (Israel, the Northern Kingdom) obeyed not the voice of the Lord their God, but transgressed (violated) His Covenant (describes the reason for the fall) . . .*

Here the Israelites were cursed (taken captive by Assyria and deported) because they abandoned the Lord's commandments and so lost the Lord's protection.

***“ . . . Christians keep God out of their lives
in the areas in which they allow
sin to reign. . . ”***

Sadly, many Christians today are not walking in step with God's Spirit and are, in ignorance, or even rebellion, being taken captive by the enemy to varying degrees. Indeed ignorance is one of the main doors by which people give the devil and his forces permission to enter their lives and bring them into bondage. These agents of darkness use every available means of deception to keep the heathen in darkness and to promote darkness in the minds of Christians. Lies, duplicity, false promises and deceit are all weapons used by the enemy - to entice, seduce and blind to the truth, the truth that would set the sinner free (John 8:31-32). Most Christians do not know when, let alone how, the devil is at work in their lives. This is because they remain uneducated in spiritual matters, and do not know their rights and authority in Christ, or the power that is available to them through the Divine Nature.

THE WAY OUT OF BONDAGE

Background Reading: John 8:31-36

The answer for people who have placed themselves under the law of sin and death and its penalties (in any area) is to:

1. Discover or refresh themselves in the knowledge of “the finished work of Christ.” This means we identify with Him, being in Him in His death and Resurrection:

ROMANS 6:3 Do you not know that all we who were placed in Christ Jesus, in His death were placed? (Wuest)

ROMANS 6:4 We therefore were entombed with Him through this being placed in His death, in order that in the same manner as there was raised up Christ out from among those who are dead through the glory of the Father, thus also we by means of a new life imparted (that being the Divine Nature) may order our behavior. (Wuest)

From this base, people then need to:

2. Seek whatever truth is needed in their life. God guarantees that we will find truth if we seek it diligently with a sincere, open heart. We should always allow God to show us the way, however, so that step by step, we can obtain what we need.

ISAIAH 55:6 Seek the Lord while He may be found; call upon Him while He is near.

ISAIAH 55:7 Let the wicked forsake his way and the unrighteous man his thoughts; and let him return unto the Lord, and He will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for He will abundantly (freely) pardon (a promise of forgiveness).

MATTHEW 7:7 Ask and it shall be given you (whatever you have need of); seek (with a sincere heart) and you shall find; knock, and it (the door) shall be opened unto you.

MATTHEW 7:8 For every one who asks receives; and he who seeks (God’s will) finds; and to him who knocks, it shall be opened.

3. Acknowledge the truth. We need to acknowledge that our way is wrong and that God's way is right. Indeed, His way is the only way that is perfect.

PSALM 18:30 As for God, His way is perfect: the Word of the Lord is (tested and) tried . . .

JOHN 14:6 Jesus said unto him, "I am the way, the truth, and the life . . . "

ISAIAH 55:8 "For My thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways My ways," says the Lord.

ISAIAH 55:9 "For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are My ways higher than your ways, and My thoughts than your thoughts."

We need to have heart-knowledge that God is faithful to His Word, and perfect and just in all His ways. We need to have the attitude that God's Word is final, being the law of righteousness by which we live. We need to give His Word first place in our lives and esteem it above all else.

PSALM 119:72 The law of Your mouth is better unto me than thousands of (pieces of) gold and silver. (The possession of the Scriptures is greater wealth than all the treasure the world contains : E.S.B.)

PSALM 119:165 Great peace have they who love Your law: and nothing shall offend them (make them stumble).

4. Repent of wrong. After acknowledging truth, we need to repent of any wrongdoing according to 1 John 1:9 so that our fellowship with God can be fully restored, first legally then experientially. The Blood of Christ must cover all sin - at salvation and after salvation - in order for us to be totally set free.

1 JOHN 1:9 If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness (consequences of sin).

True repentance requires a heart commitment to turn around from the wrong (sin) we have been doing, and then to live and act according to God's Word. God will then give us the power to overcome in that particular area.

5. Act according to truth. This involves total submission to God's law of truth. Our repentance will be demonstrated in our actions of faith empowered by the Divine Nature.

JAMES 2:17 Even so faith, if it has not works, is dead (lifeless), being alone (true faith will always produce works, which are then the proof of its genuineness, as the next verse states).

JAMES 2:18 Yes, a man may say, "You have faith, and I have works:" show me your faith without your works, and I will show you my faith by my works.

6. Fellowship regularly with God. This includes praising and worshipping the Lord on both an individual and a corporate basis. We should also be speaking to Him through prayer and listening for His response (Ephesians 6:18; Revelation 3:20; John 4:23.)

7. Continue to follow God in all things. To maintain a successful walk in the Lord, we need to consistently study His Word and observe to do, by His grace, all that He says. In this way we can be blessed of God and be a blessing to others.

2 TIMOTHY 2:15 Study to show yourself approved unto God (as a workman who has been put to the test and has proven himself), a workman who needs not to be ashamed, rightly dividing (analyzing) the Word of truth (Hebrews 5:13-14).

JOSHUA 1:8 This Book of the Law (God's Word today) shall not depart out of your mouth (you are to talk about

*the Word constantly): **but you shall meditate therein day and night** (you are to think about the Word constantly), **that you may observe** (be watchful) **to do** (act) **according to all that is written therein:** (and this is the promise) **for then you shall make your way prosperous, and then you shall have good success.***

Our success must not be measured by the world's standards of riches and fame. It can only be measured by our obedience to the Lord (in His strength), so that we walk in His perfect will. This is the only true measure of success. Our character will then reflect and display this success in all that we do.

***“ . . . Our success must not be measured
by the world's standards of riches
and fame. . . ”***

The Word states that we do not live on physical food alone, but by every Word that proceeds from the mouth of God, i.e. God's Word (Matthew 4:4). God has given us this Manual of Life so we can know our rights and authority in Christ and have victory in all we do.

***PROVERBS 3:5 Trust in the Lord with all your heart;
and lean not unto your own understanding*** (your own thinking, your own way of doing things).

PROVERBS 3:6 In all your ways acknowledge Him (in other words, do not self-rule which is man's greatest problem), **and He shall direct your paths.**

COLOSSIANS 1:10 That you might walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing (to please Him in all respects), **being fruitful** (bearing fruit) **in every good work, and increasing in the knowledge of God;**

COLOSSIANS 1:11 Strengthened with all might, **according to His glorious power** (so that you may live a

holy life), unto all patience and longsuffering with joyfulness;

ECCLESIASTES 7:19 Wisdom strengthens the wise more than ten mighty men (rulers) who are in the city. (A city is far better off having ten wise men than ten mighty men . . . : E.S.B.)

ISAIAH 40:31 . . . they who wait upon the Lord (constantly seek His face so as to do His will) shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run, and not be weary; and they shall walk, and not faint (shall have the strength needed for their journey of faith - Matthew 11:28-30).

As we dedicate ourselves to serve our Lord by goaling to do all He commands, God promises that He will give us the strength to overcome. We allow Him to empower us, through the graces of His Divine Nature, as we determine to do what is right and believe that He will indeed provide not only truth, but also the strength required to walk in it. As scripture tells us:

PHILIPPIANS 4:13 I can do all things through Christ Who strengthens me (as I submit to God and His Word).

May you have the victory in Christ. Amen!

For further information or teaching material to help you grow in the Christian faith, please visit:

***CROSSROADS INTERNATIONAL
FULL GOSPEL MINISTRIES
crossroadsministries.org.au***

NOTES

NOTES

NOTES

- 1 S.B.C. Daniel, pg.332.
- 2 The Pulpit Commentary, Galatians 5:18, pg.255.
- 3 Wuest, Kenneth S., Wuest's Word Studies from the Greek New Testament, Golden Nuggets from the Greek New Testament, pg.102.

*"We have a vision
to see people living
in abundant life
by the power of God
through Jesus Christ"*



www.crossroadsministries.org.au