

Illegalism

by Dave Miller, Ph.D.

God is a God of law. He has **always** interacted with humans via His Word, i.e., law (e.g., Genesis 2:16-17). God governs both the Universe and humanity by law. God's laws are **always** good (Deuteronomy 6:24; 10:12-13). They rise out of His nature and are consistent with His character and His divine attributes. God is infinite in the attribute of righteousness.

Righteousness is directly linked to right-doing, i.e., law-keeping (1 John 3:4,7,10; Deuteronomy 6:24-25). And God's legal restrictions have always been completely appropriate and absolutely perfect: "Therefore the law is holy, and the commandment holy and just and good" (Romans 7:12).



Indeed, law is absolutely indispensable to human civilization. Those who live their lives under submission to God possess great respect, even love, for law. The psalmist stated repeatedly that he **loved** God's laws (Psalm 119:47,48,97,113,119,127,159,163,165,167). He expressed "delight" in God's laws (vss. 16,24,35,47,70,77,92,143,174; cf. Psalm 1:2; 112:1), even insisting, "I long for Your precepts" (Psalm 119:40; cf. vs. 174). Paul decried those who lack "love of the truth" (2 Thessalonians 2:10). You can mark it down: to the extent that a society either disdains law, or recklessly enjoins laws that conflict with God's laws, that nation will experience social chaos, confusion, and eventual collapse.

Beginning in the 1950s and 1960s in America, and escalating to the present moment, rebellion against law has become an entrenched cultural phenomenon. It first manifested itself in earnest in the 1960s baby-boomer generation of people who rebelled against authority by rejecting the values and traditions of their parents. The criminal justice system itself commenced an overhaul in which the focus shifted from the rights and protection of the victim to the rights of the criminal. Now in many respects the criminal justice system has lost the respect it once possessed. Respect for police, lawyers, and judges that once characterized the American people has turned into suspicion, distrust, and outright disgust. Law has become a mockery to many.

The same may be said for the public schools of America. The extensive encroachment of evolution has contributed to a lawless spirit, since evolution postulates no higher law than the godless "law of the jungle." Coincidentally, the schools have been fraught with discipline problems since the 1960s due to loss of respect for authority. Christendom suffers from the same plight. Conformity to law and doctrine is now ridiculed as "legalism." Where once homosexuality was condemned in accordance with Bible teaching, now homosexuals are being installed as church leaders. The simple worship practices stipulated in the New Testament are exchanged for practices that stroke the fleshly desires of the worshipper—from communion for cats to the use of praise teams and instrumental music.

Widespread cultural disrespect for law and restriction began with the over-indulged baby-boomer generation that did not receive the same discipline techniques used by previous generations. An inherent hostility for law naturally ensued. Subsequent generations have inevitably followed the same course. Since pluralism, humanism, "political correctness," and post-modernism have thoroughly saturated culture, aversion to rules, objective truth, and clear-cut moral values are the order of the day. Right and wrong are determined moment-by-moment by the individual, who merely reacts to external stimuli based on subjective preference and fleshly inclination.

To see the depth to which society has plummeted in its revulsion toward law, consider the current national discussion regarding illegal immigrants. Millions of illegal aliens have poured into the country in dire and direct violation of law. The softened attitude regarding the sacred nature of law, and the need to respect and obey that law, coupled with a redefinition of "compassion," has led many to throw up their arms and say, "What does it matter?" Large numbers of elected politicians are dogged in their determination to grant amnesty in one form or another (suggesting a suspicious desire for political empowerment). Whatever our political or social view may be regarding illegal immigration, we must acknowledge that the law has been flagrantly broken, and respect for law demands that proper punishment/consequences be levied. Anything short of implementing the full force of the law against lawbreakers will only undermine civilization by encouraging further disrespect for legal standards. When law is brushed aside, when citizens or their elected officials see themselves as qualified and authorized to ignore the law, or make their own exceptions to the law, they place themselves above

the law, and contribute to the destruction of the very underpinnings of society—that which provides cohesion, stability, and consistency to civilization.

Moses' warning to the Israelites 3,500 years ago, regarding the critical importance of God's law in their possession of the land of Canaan, applies to America today:

Set your hearts on all the words which I testify among you today, which you shall command your children to be careful to observe—all the words of this law. For it is not a futile thing for you, because **it is your life**, and **by this word you shall prolong your days in the land** (Deuteronomy 32:46-47, emp. added).

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