

Faith, Grace, & Law (2)

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In our last 3 lessons we examined the role of God's grace, our faith, and God's law for us. God's grace is His role in the redemption plan of mankind and includes everything He did to accomplish the salvation of man. There must be a response from man in order for God's grace to be of any value to mankind. If everything God did to save man did not require any response then everybody who ever lived would be saved no matter how they lived or how they believed. Jesus makes it clear that this is not the case in, Matthew 7:14, "*Because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it.*"

The required response to God's gracious offer of salvation is summed up in God's word as "*Faith*", and as a comprehensive Biblical term represents everything man does in response to God's grace. Grace is God reaching down from Heaven to mankind with an offer and a means of salvation. Faith is man reaching upwards to God in hope of salvation. Grace is God reaching down to man. Faith is man reaching up to God.

Any response whatsoever from mankind is a work. A work is defined as a mental or physical action which produces a result. God's grace and man's faith work together to produce a result. Both grace and faith are works. Grace is the work of God. Faith is the work of man. Both grace and faith are indispensable to the salvation process and both of them are works. Thus we rightfully conclude that if works were not necessary, then salvation would be possible without any response from man whatsoever. Matthew 7:21 teaches us that only those who do the will of God can enter the kingdom of Heaven.

Grace is God working. Faith is man working.

We also saw that works cannot save us by circumventing God's grace or our faith. Works cannot save us by going around Jesus Christ to get us to heaven. Works cannot save us by compelling God to offer His grace. God's grace is a gift freely offered completely exclusive of man's works. Works cannot save us by earning, paying for, or deserving salvation in any way. If works could save us, we wouldn't need God's



The Law of Moses has passed. Christ's Law prevails today.

grace. In these ways, works cannot save us, but faith is defined in the word of God as a work ([1 Thessalonians 1:3](#), [2 Thessalonians 1:11](#)), so even though there are some ways in which works cannot save us, they are our response to God's grace and they are absolutely necessary if we want to be granted eternal life with God on heaven. Works are a necessary component of faith.

God gave us law in the new covenant. We saw from scripture that there were two major law systems spoken of in the new testament. There is the old law, which was the law of Moses which has been done away with. The law of Moses was the old covenant law. Christians today live under the new covenant, or new testament. The new testament contains law as well. The new covenant law of God replaced the old covenant law.

Law, simply defined is a rule of behavior. So from this we know that new covenant law is simply the way God wants us to live. God's law under the new testament is how he wants us to behave as His children. If we did not have God's law, we would not know what our response to God's grace should be. Without God's law, we would not know how he wants us to live.

1. Why did God give us His law?

Both God's law and God's commandments are rules of behavior. Both are how God wants us to behave. So when we see a reference to a commandment of God in the new testament, unless it is a reference to old testament law, we are to regard it as God's rule of behavior, or simply God's law. God's new testament commandments are Law. Any reference in the new testament to something God wants us to do or how he wants us to behave is law.

God's law communicates His wishes to us. As Christians, we are regarded as the children of God. Regarding Christians, Galatians 3:26, reads, "*For ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus.*" God is our Spiritual Father, 2 Thessalonians 1:2, "*Grace unto you, and peace, from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.*" Like any loving parent, God gives His children law because He loves them.

Without instructions, we as God's children cannot know what He expects of us. The word of God teaches us in John 5:28-29 that there is an "*hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice, And shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation.*" It would be a cruel Father indeed who would condemn His children without telling them what they needed to do in order to avoid the damnation and receive the resurrection of life. We as earthly parents teach our earthly children how to behave because we love them and we don't want to see them come to harm. Our Spiritual Father in heaven gave us His law for the exact same reason.

1 John 5:2-3

*"By this we know that we love the children of God, when we love God, and keep his commandments.
3 For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments: and his commandments are not grievous."*

God gave us His law because He loves us.

2 John 5-6

“And now I beseech thee, lady, not as though I wrote a new commandment unto thee, but that which we had from the beginning, that we love one another.

6 And this is love, that we walk after his commandments. This is the commandment, That, as ye have heard from the beginning, ye should walk in it.”

2. What does the law of God do for us?

So we know that God gave us law because of His love for us, so then what does God’s law do for us? How does it benefit us? What is the purpose of God’s law for mankind?

1) God’s Law Restricts Bad Behavior.

Galatians 5:19-21

“Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are these; Adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness,

20 Idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies,

21 Envyings, murders, drunkenness, revellings, and such like: of the which I tell you before, as I have also told you in time past, that they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God.”

1 Corinthians 6:9-10

“Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Be not deceived: neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind,

10 Nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God.”

Bad behavior causes harm to others. All of the bad things listed in these 2 scriptures are things that can bring physical harm upon ourselves or on others. God’s law does not permit us to engage in behavior that is harmful to others or ourselves. Imagine if you will what a society would be like if obeyed just these two scriptures. There would be no sexually transmitted diseases associated with the sexual sins listed above because there would be no sex outside the marriage bond. There would be no witches, no body who was envious of the other, no murderers, no drunkards, no thieves, no haters, no extortionists, etc, etc. The list goes on and on. It would be a society of complete peace and harmony.

God’s law restricts these kinds of behavior and promotes peace and order within society. He gave us this law because He loves us and His love is clearly seen through His Law.

2) God’s Law Provides Equality

Galatians 3:28

“There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus.”

Romans 2:6-11

“Who will render to every man according to his deeds:

7 To them who by patient continuance in well doing seek for glory and honour and immortality, eternal life:

8 But unto them that are contentious, and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness, indignation and wrath,

9 Tribulation and anguish, upon every soul of man that doeth evil, of the Jew first, and also of the Gentile;

10 But glory, honour, and peace, to every man that worketh good, to the Jew first, and also to the Gentile:

11 For there is no respect of persons with God.”

In a society living faithfully under God’s law, there is no need for civil rights movements. There would no bigots, there would no race baiters or racial crimes. There would be no women’s rights violations. There would be no classes in society at all. Everyone would be equal and live in peace.

Also, under God’s law there is going to be equality in judgment. Those who do bad things are going to be punished with no regard to race, color, creed, class, or however much money they have. We cannot buy justice and equality from God. Under His law, we have it.

God’s Law Provides Unity

Ephesians 4:1-6

1 “I therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you that ye walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called,

2 With all lowliness and meekness, with longsuffering, forbearing one another in love;

3 Endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.

4 There is one body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling;

5 One Lord, one faith, one baptism,

6 One God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all.”

Just drive through almost any town in the United States. You will see any number of denominations on your way through. Each one has its own set of beliefs which vary from one another. Jesus only established one body and there is only one law. If everybody on earth obeyed only one law then there would be only one church. All Christians would be united under one head, Jesus Christ. There would be no religious confusion. There would be no need to hunt for a church that taught the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth because all Christians everywhere would be united.

God’s Law provides order.

In our assemblies God commanded order

1 Corinthians 14:33

33 “For God is not the author of confusion, but of peace, as in all churches of the saints.”

1 Corinthians 14:40

40 “*Let all things be done decently and in order.*”

In Business God’s law requires order

Romans 12:11

“Not slothful in business; fervent in spirit; serving the Lord”

In our Christian lives, God’s law requires order:

Hebrews 6:12

“*That ye be not slothful, but followers of them who through faith and patience inherit the promises.*”

God’s law restricts disruptive and harmful behavior to one another:

2 Corinthians 12:20

For I fear, lest, when I come, I shall not find you such as I would, and that I shall be found unto you such as ye would not: lest there be debates, envyings, wraths, strifes, backbitings, whisperings, swellings, tumults:

God’s Law provides for the protection of others.

Protection for Our enemies:

Matthew 5:44, “*But I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you*”

Protection for one another:

Galatians 5:15

“*But if ye bite and devour one another, take heed that ye be not consumed one of another.*”

Galatians 5:26, “*Let us not be desirous of vain glory, provoking one another, envying one another.*”

Ephesians 4:2-3, “*With all lowliness and meekness, with longsuffering, forbearing one another in love 3 Endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.*”

Colossians 3:13, “*Forbearing one another, and forgiving one another, if any man have a quarrel against any: even as Christ forgave you, so also do ye.*”

God’s Law will be used in judgment

James 2:12-13 *“So speak ye, and so do, as they that shall be judged by the law of liberty. 13 For he shall have judgment without mercy, that hath shewed no mercy; and mercy rejoiceth against judgment.”*

John 12:48 *“He that rejecteth me, and receiveth not my words, hath one that judgeth him: the word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day.”*

Romans 12:19-21, *“Dearly beloved, avenge not yourselves, but rather give place unto wrath: for it is written, Vengeance is mine; I will repay, saith the Lord.*

20 Therefore if thine enemy hunger, feed him; if he thirst, give him drink: for in so doing thou shalt heap coals of fire on his head.

21 Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good.”

God's Law includes what we must do in order to be saved

2 Timothy 3:16-17, *“All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: 17 That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works.”*

Looking back to what we read earlier in 1 John 5:2-3, *“By this we know that we love the children of God, when we love God, and keep his commandments. 3 For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments: and his commandments are not grievous.”* John makes it clear that God's love for us is evident through His law.

God demonstrates His love for us by restricting bad behavior through His law.

God demonstrates His love for us by promoting unity in His law.

God demonstrates His love for us by promoting order in His law.

God demonstrates His love for us by protecting others through His law.

God demonstrates His love for us by punishing those who have harmed us.

God demonstrates His love for us by giving us the complete instructions for living an acceptable life and inheriting an eternal home in Heaven.

God's laws are there entirely for our benefit. Imagine what a society would be like if everyone in it lived in accordance with God's law. It would be a very different society than any we see today in the world. If everyone lived according to God's law all of the bad things we see in our society today would disappear instantly. We'd be living in a harmonious, loving, unified society where nobody would have to fear thieves, rapists or murderers. There would be no hate crimes, no abortions, no sexually transmitted diseases. There would be no wars, no religious differences, no broken homes with children being raised by single parents. There would be no moral corruption, no need for locks or alarms or police protection.

If everybody lived in accordance with God's law then all of the self inflicted scourges of humanity would instantly disappear and this physical life would take on whole new look.

Yes there is law in the new covenant and every single element of it is for the wellbeing of mankind. God loves us, so He gave us the rules to live by. Those who do live by the rules are doing what they can to promote goodness and righteousness wherever they are. They are the lights shining in the darkness.

Those who do not live in accordance with God's laws are the darkness. Through their actions, they contribute to the problems we see in society today. Those who live outside the law of God are not part of the solution, they are part of the problem.

And in the end, when all this life has ended, and we stand before God in judgment, the life we lived in accordance to the rules God graciously gave us will determine where we spend our eternity.

Mankind is sinful and lost. By grace we are saved through faith. Grace is God's role and represents everything He did in providing mankind with a hope for salvation. Faith is man's role and represents everything done in response to God's grace. Both grace and faith are works, neither of which can save us by going around the blood of Christ. And God's law is where we find the instructions for how we are to respond to God's grace in faith.

No grace? Lost with no hope!

No faith? Lost with no chance!

No works? Lost with no faith!

No law? Lost with no guidance!

Romans 2:5-13

“But after thy hardness and impenitent heart treasurest up unto thyself wrath against the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God;

6 Who will render to every man according to his deeds:

7 To them who by patient continuance in well doing seek for glory and honour and immortality, eternal life:

8 But unto them that are contentious, and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness, indignation and wrath,

9 Tribulation and anguish, upon every soul of man that doeth evil, of the Jew first, and also of the Gentile;

10 But glory, honour, and peace, to every man that worketh good, to the Jew first, and also to the Gentile:

11 For there is no respect of persons with God.

12 For as many as have sinned without law shall also perish without law: and as many as have sinned in the law shall be judged by the law;

13 (For not the hearers of the law are just before God, but the doers of the law shall be justified.)“

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