



## Week 12 – The Law And The Disciple

The sermon on the mount can be understood most clearly as a description of the Kingdom of God and its people. The King is explaining how His citizens will be known (the beatitudes), how they are meant to engage with the world (salt and light), how they will interpret the Law of the Kingdom (“You have heard it said... but I say...”), etc. If we are going to be disciples of Jesus, citizens of His Kingdom, servants in His court, we need to know what the King expects of our law-keeping. So let’s take some time and refresh our understanding of the Law, and test our hearts to see if we respond like kingdom citizens.

Exercise: Your Group leader has an exercise for you to do that will initiate the first discussion.

Discussion: What were the first thoughts you had on hearing what the exercise was, before you even started? How easy or hard was the exercise for you? In the group, discuss how it made you feel, and why. How relevant do you think this exercise is to Christians on this side of the cross? Is it still important? What has changed?

The relationship between the Law and a disciple of Christ can be difficult to grasp because the Law is accomplishing several things all at once. Let’s consider a few.

Purpose 1: Read Romans 7:7-12

In this text, what role does Paul say the Law plays in his life? Compare this to the response of Moses to the people in Exodus 20:18. Does the Law seem to have continuity of purpose between the old and the new testament in this regard? Can you describe a specific time or area of your own life where the Law filled this purpose? Was it beneficial or a hinderance to your faith?



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Purpose 2: Read Galatians 3:21-24

According to this text, what role did/does the Law play in the life of a Christian? In what sense do you think Paul meant the Law “protected” us? From who or what? What does Paul say the Law can’t give us? Where can we get what the Law can’t offer?

Purpose 3: Read Hebrews 10:1-7

According to this text what is the Law doing? As we read about the sacrifices and the rituals of the Law where does the mind of a Christian go? How does the presence and practice of the Law for nearly 2000 years before Christ impact our understanding of Christ? According to verses 5-7 what was the true desire of God, even during the time of the Law?

Read Col 2:16-17

What is Paul’s practical application of this reality about the Law in light of what the Christian now has in Christ? How do these verses explain the difference between how people followed God in the Old Testament verses today in the New Covenant?

Discontinuity vs Continuity: Legalism vs Obedience

As we can see, the Law served most of its purpose prior to Christ’s birth, death and resurrection. We also see that as Christians our interaction with the rituals and commandments of the Law are very different than Israelites living under the Law. There is clearly a sense of “discontinuity” in how the Law functions between the old and new. Because Jesus has fulfilled the Law, its reign over us is over. But from our text on Sunday, Jesus emphasizes the continuity He brings to the Law, that it has not been abolished, that His disciples have a new relationship to the Law that surpasses what the Pharisees could even imagine.

Jesus is talking about obedience. Read Matthew 23:23-24.

In this text Jesus is contrasting legalism with true obedience. What three things does Jesus name as the “weighty” part of the Law. According to this text what aspect of the Law still holds true for followers of Jesus?

Next week we will be looking more closely at this distinction between legalism and obedience as Jesus unpacks specific teachings of the Law and how His disciples are meant to understand them.

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