

Do You Know How Free from The Law You Are?

The knowledge of our freedom from the law and from all religious law is core to the gospel¹. Yet, the “Christian” world is heavy-laden with laws ranging from the Old Covenant laws to the do’s and don’ts commonly taught in churches today.

The truth that sets us free is to know that as believers in Jesus Christ we are no longer guided nor taught by laws, but by God’s amazing grace. We do not live in a “balance” of grace and law, but rather by grace through faith alone. Any attempt to mix the two systems will result in misery and frustration. Only when we are living by this grace alone will we be truly free.

I. Believers in Jesus Christ are dead to the law.

Romans 7:1-6

*Or do you not know, brethren (for I speak to those who know the law), that the law has dominion over a man as long as he lives? ² For the woman who has a husband is bound by the law to her husband as long as he lives. But if the husband dies, she is released from the law of her husband. ³ So then if, while her husband lives, she marries another man, she will be called an adulteress; but if her husband dies, she is free from that law, so that she is no adulteress, though she has married another man. ⁴ **Therefore, my brethren, you also have become dead to the law through the body of Christ, that you may be married to another—to Him who was raised from the dead, that we should bear fruit to God.** ⁵ For when we were in the flesh, the sinful passions which were aroused by the law were at work in our members to bear fruit to death. ⁶ **But now we have been delivered from the law, having died to what we were held by,** so that we should serve in the newness of the Spirit and not in the oldness of the letter.*

A. Under the law we brought forth fruit to death. Under grace we bear fruit to God.

Romans 6:20-22

*For when you were slaves of sin, you were free in regard to righteousness. ²¹ **What fruit did you have then in the things of which you are now ashamed? For the end of those things is death.** ²² But now having been set free from sin, and having become slaves of God, you have your fruit to holiness, and the end, everlasting life. ²³ For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.*

B. Paul is not mincing words here. He states is very clearly. We have been delivered from the law. We died to the law.

1. The word “deliver” is *katargeō* which means: to be (render) entirely idle (useless), literally or figuratively: - abolish, cease, cumber, deliver, destroy, do

¹ “Gospel” means good news which is glad tidings of good things from God. It refers to the good news about Jesus Christ and what He has accomplished.

away, become (make) of no (none, without) effect, fail, loose, bring (come) to nought, put away (down), vanish away, make void. -Strong's
NASEC-to render inoperative, abolish: - abolished

C. We no longer serve in the oldness of the letter (the law), but in the newness of the Spirit.

2 Corinthians 3:4-6

*And we have such trust through Christ toward God. 5 Not that we are sufficient of ourselves to think of anything as being from ourselves, but our sufficiency is from God, 6 who also made us sufficient as ministers of the new covenant, **not of the letter but of the Spirit; for the letter kills, but the Spirit gives life.***

II. Believers in Jesus Christ are not under law, rather we are under grace.

Romans 6:14

For sin shall not have dominion over you, for you are not under law but under grace.

John 1:17

For the law was given through Moses, but grace and truth came through Jesus Christ.

A. Some have said that “truth” here refers to law, but considering that John is putting them in opposition to each other in this verse, there is no way to come to this conclusion.

III. The Proper Purpose of the Law

A. For the Unrighteous Person²

1 Timothy 1:8-11

*But we know that the law is good **if** one uses it lawfully, ⁹ knowing this: that the law is **not made for a righteous person**, but for the lawless and insubordinate, for the ungodly and for sinners, for the unholy and profane, for murderers of fathers and murderers of mothers, for manslayers, ¹⁰ for fornicators, for sodomites, for kidnappers, for liars, for perjurers, and if there is any other thing that is contrary to sound doctrine, ¹¹ according to the glorious gospel of the blessed God which was committed to my trust.*

B. To lead the Jew³ to Christ

Galatians 3:19-26

What purpose then does the law⁴ serve? It was added because of transgressions, till the Seed should come to whom the promise was made; and it was appointed through angels by the hand of a mediator. 20 Now a mediator does not mediate for one only, but God is one.

² In scripture “the righteous” refers to believers in Jesus Christ who have been made righteous by faith. “The unrighteous” refers to those who do not believe in Jesus. (See 1 Cor. 6:1 where Paul speaks of the saints and the unrighteous and Rom. 5:19 which show that Jesus makes us righteous.)

³ To lead the Jew, and by extension the Gentile, to Christ.

⁴ This passage is clearly referring to the Old Covenant Law.

21 Is the law then against the promises of God? Certainly not! For if there had been a law given which could have given life, truly righteousness would have been by the law. 22 But the Scripture has confined all under sin, that **the promise by faith in Jesus Christ might be given to those who believe**. 23 But before faith came, we were kept under guard by the law, kept for the faith which would afterward be revealed. 24 Therefore **the law was our tutor to bring us to Christ, that we might be justified by faith**. 25 **But after faith has come, we are no longer under a tutor**. 26 For you are all sons of God through **faith in Christ Jesus**.

1. The Law was given until the Seed, Jesus, could come. For this reason, the Law was not against the promises, but the Law was not the Promise. The Law was so perfect that if it were possible to be made righteous by law, this law would have made one righteous (right with God). But it didn't.

a. **Paul refers to a righteousness based on the law as self-righteousness.**

1) Paul described Israel as zealous for God but as having not submitted to the righteousness of God which comes only by faith in Jesus.

Romans 10:1-4

*Brethren, my heart's desire and prayer to God for Israel is that they may be saved. 2 For I bear them witness that they have a zeal for God, but not according to knowledge. 3 For they being ignorant of God's righteousness, and seeking to establish their **own righteousness**, have not submitted to the **righteousness of God**. 4 For **Christ** is the end of the law for righteousness to everyone who believes.*

2) Paul describes his own experience of giving up his own self-righteousness based on following the law in order to receive the righteousness by faith in Christ.

Philippians 3:4-11

*If anyone else thinks he may have confidence in the flesh⁵, I more so: ⁵ circumcised the eighth day, of the stock of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of the Hebrews; concerning the law, a Pharisee; ⁶ concerning zeal, persecuting the church; **concerning the righteousness which is in the law, blameless**. ⁷ But what things were gain to me, these I have counted loss for Christ. ⁸ Yet indeed I also count all things loss for the excellence of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them as rubbish, that I may gain Christ ⁹ and be found in Him, **not having my own righteousness, which is from the law**, but that which is through **faith in Christ, the righteousness which is from God by faith**; ¹⁰ that I may know Him and the power of His resurrection, and the*

⁵ Notice that "confidence in the flesh" refers to a religious self-righteousness. The "flesh" used in this sense in Philippians is also used in Galatians to mean the same thing.

fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death, ¹¹ if, by any means, I may attain to the resurrection from the dead.

a) *To clear up a common misunderstanding in verses 10-11, Paul is not saying here that it was his “goal” to know Christ and the power of His resurrection, nor that he was working toward attaining the resurrection from the dead. He is saying that He gave up his own righteousness which was based on the law in order to receive the righteousness that is based on faith in Christ alone. In other words, He wasn’t trying to attain these things. He is saying he already obtained these things by receiving the righteousness which comes only by faith in Christ.*

2. Righteousness is not by the law. God has declared that everyone, those who obey the law, and those who do not, to be UNDER SIN...unrighteous.

Romans 3:19

Now we know that whatever the law says, it says to those who are under the law, that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God.

3. He did this so that all could be made righteous (justified/made right with God), not by the Law of Moses, but by believing in Jesus.

Acts 13:38-40

Therefore let it be known to you, brethren, that through this Man is preached to you the forgiveness of sins; ³⁹ and by Him everyone who believes is justified from all things from which you could not be justified by the law of Moses.

4. Before faith in Christ came, the law served as a tutor. A tutor was someone who followed children to school. They had a long stick to tap them if they went the wrong way. The law’s purpose was not to make anyone righteous, but to lead them to the One who could make them righteous through faith in that One, Jesus Christ.

Galatians 3:24

Therefore the law was our tutor to bring us to Christ, that we might be justified by faith.

5. Paul is very clear. After faith in Jesus Christ has come, the person no longer needs the law. We no longer need that long stick telling us what to do.

Galatians 3:25

But after faith has come, we are no longer under a tutor.

6. We are sons of God by faith, not by obeying the Law.

Galatians 3:26

*For you are all sons of God through **faith** in Christ Jesus.*

7. We are justified (made righteous) by grace through faith, not law.

Romans 3:21-26

*But now the righteousness of God **apart from the law** is revealed, being witnessed by the Law and the Prophets, ²² even the righteousness of God, through **faith** in Jesus*

*Christ, to all and on all who believe. For there is no difference; 23 for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, 24 **being justified freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus**, 25 whom God set forth as a propitiation by His blood, through faith, to demonstrate His righteousness, because in His forbearance God had passed over the sins that were previously committed, 26 to demonstrate at the present time His righteousness, that He might be just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus.*

Galatians 2:16

*16 knowing that a man is **not** justified by the works of the law but by **faith** in Jesus Christ, even we have **believed** in Christ Jesus, that we might be **justified by faith in Christ** and **not by the works of the law**; for by the works of the law **no** flesh shall be justified.*

- C. Let it be clear here that we are NOT discussing civil laws within a society. We are discussing **religious** laws. Paul makes it clear in Romans 13 that even though we are free from religious laws, we are still to obey civil laws and to respect those in civil authority⁶.

1. The civil laws serve a similar purpose as the Law of Moses did; that is, to restrain those who are evil.

Romans 13:1-6

Let every soul be subject to the governing authorities. For there is no authority except from God, and the authorities that exist are appointed by God. ² Therefore whoever resists the authority resists the ordinance of God, and those who resist will bring judgment on themselves. ³ For rulers are not a terror to good works, but to evil. Do you want to be unafraid of the authority? Do what is good, and you will have praise from the same. ⁴ For he is God's minister to you for good. But if you do evil, be afraid; for he does not bear the sword in vain; for he is God's minister, an avenger to execute wrath on him who practices evil. ⁵ Therefore you must be subject, not only because of wrath but also for conscience' sake. ⁶ For because of this you also pay taxes, for they are God's ministers attending continually to this very thing. ⁷ Render therefore to all their due: taxes to whom taxes are due, customs to whom customs, fear to whom fear, honor to whom honor.

IV. Out with the Old and in with the New

- A. Gentile believers (non-Jews) were NEVER UNDER THE OLD COVENANT. It was a covenant made ONLY WITH THE JEWS. The Jews and the Gentiles are made one group in Christ and all are now under the New Covenant ONLY.
- B. The Old Covenant is obsolete.

⁶ There are exceptions. Three notable ones are: 1) If asked to worship someone other than the one true God, 2) If asked to do something immoral, and 3) If told to not preach in the name of Jesus. It is also acceptable to stand up for and insist on the rights we have according to the civil law.

Hebrews 8:7-13

*For if that first covenant had been faultless, then no place would have been sought for a second. ⁸ Because finding fault with them, He says: “Behold, the days are coming, says the LORD, when I will make a **new** covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah— ⁹ **not** according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day when I took them by the hand to lead them out of the land of Egypt; because they did not continue in My covenant, and I disregarded them, says the LORD. ¹⁰ For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, says the LORD: I will put My laws in their mind and write them on their hearts; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people. ¹¹ None of them shall teach his neighbor, and none his brother, saying, ‘Know the LORD,’ for all shall know Me, from the least of them to the greatest of them. ¹² For I will be merciful to their unrighteousness, and their sins and their lawless deeds I will remember no more.” ¹³ In that He says, “A new covenant,” **He has made the first obsolete**. Now what is becoming obsolete and growing old is ready to vanish away.*

V. The Beginning of the New Covenant

A. The way that most Bibles are divided can make the topic of the Old and New Covenant a little confusing.

1. The Old Testament (Covenant) does NOT begin in Genesis 1, but in Exodus 20 when the Ten Commandments are given.
2. The New Covenant does NOT begin in the first chapters of Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John. It begins at the death of Christ.
 - a. The New Covenant began with the shedding of Christ’s blood.

Hebrews 9:16-17

For where there is a testament, there must also of necessity be the death of the testator. ¹⁷ For a testament is in force after men are dead, since it has no power at all while the testator lives.

- b. While Jesus was on earth, the Old Testament was in place. His ministry was primarily to those under the law. He was preparing them for the kingdom of God. This is important to understand while reading His words. We must consider all of what He said in context.

Galatians 4:4-5

But when the fullness of the time had come, God sent forth His Son, born of a woman, born under the law, ⁵ to redeem those who were under the law, that we might receive the adoption as sons.

VI. The Ten Commandments

Few topics spark more controversy than that of whether or not the Ten Commandments are part of the New Covenant. Most believers are quite passionate about them or have an emotional or traditional attachment to their sacred

significance. Even after understanding well the concept of grace, many still cling to them as a moral guide.

Before examining this topic it is important to state the following. Any born again believer who fully understands and embraces the gospel of the grace of God will supernaturally live in such a way that reflects the change that has happened in them. Through believing in Jesus and loving one another, our lives are actually better than if we were following the Ten Commandments. However, the Ten Commandments are the core of the Old Covenant and believers are NOT under the Old Covenant

A. In Exodus, we read that God miraculously delivered the Children of Israel out of captivity from Egypt where they worked as slaves. He opened the Red Sea and brought them to Mt. Sinai. There God called Moses up to the mountain and God himself wrote on stone tablets the Ten Commandments. Later, when Moses saw that the Children of Israel had constructed a golden calf and were worshipping it while Moses was meeting with God, Moses threw the tablets to the ground and they were broken. However, God in His compassion called Moses back up into Mt. Sinai and wrote again on stone tablets the commandments of the Old Covenant.

Exodus 34:1, 27-28

And the LORD said to Moses, "Cut two tablets of stone like the first ones, and I will write on these tablets the words that were on the first tablets which you broke."

Then the LORD said to Moses, "Write these words, for according to the tenor of these words I have made a covenant with you and with Israel."²⁸ So he was there with the LORD forty days and forty nights; he neither ate bread nor drank water.

And He wrote on the tablets the words of the covenant, the Ten Commandments.

Deuteronomy 4:13

So He declared to you His covenant which He commanded you to perform, the Ten Commandments; and He wrote them on two tablets of stone.

1. The Ten Commandments ARE the Old Covenant. The scriptures above make this unmistakably clear. The Old Covenant is obsolete.
2. Paul also referred to the Old Covenant as that which was "written and engraved on stones" which was referring to the Ten Commandments. He called them the letter which "kills", "the ministry of death", and "the ministry of condemnation".

2 Corinthians 3:5-11

Not that we are sufficient of ourselves to think of anything as being from ourselves, but our sufficiency is from God,⁶ who also made us sufficient as ministers of the new covenant, not of the letter but of the Spirit; for the letter kills, but the Spirit gives life.⁷ But if the ministry of death, written and engraved on stones, was glorious, so that the children of Israel could not look steadily at the face of Moses because of the glory of his countenance, which glory was passing away,⁸ how will the

ministry of the Spirit not be more glorious? ⁹ For if the ministry of condemnation had glory, the ministry of righteousness exceeds much more in glory. ¹⁰ For even what was made glorious had no glory in this respect, because of the glory that excels. ¹¹ For if what is passing away was glorious, what remains is much more glorious.

3. Believers in Jesus Christ are under only one covenant, the new one. We are free from the Law in its entirety.

VII. When we know that we are free from the law, we learn that we are free from the law’s system of blessings and curses and we are then free to enjoy the New Covenant’s system of blessings by grace through faith. Following is a chart showing some of the main differences between the Law system and the New Covenant.

The Old Covenant	The New Covenant
<p>Righteousness by DOING</p> <p><i>Romans 10:5</i> For Moses writes about the righteousness which is of the law, “The man who does those things shall live by them.”</p>	<p>Righteousness by BELIEVING</p> <p><i>Romans 10:10</i> For with the heart one believes unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.</p>
<p>When we do right, we are blessed.</p> <p><i>Deuteronomy 28:1-14</i> “Now it shall come to pass, if you diligently obey the voice of the LORD your God, to observe carefully all His commandments which I command you today, that the LORD your God will set you high above all nations of the earth. ² And all these blessings shall come upon you and overtake you, because you obey the voice of the LORD your God...”</p>	<p>We are already blessed.</p> <p><i>Ephesians 1:3</i> Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ.</p> <p><i>2 Peter 1:1-3</i> To those who have obtained like precious faith with us by the righteousness of our God and Savior Jesus Christ: ² Grace and peace be multiplied to you in the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord, As His divine power has given to us all things that pertain to life and godliness, through the knowledge of Him who called us by glory and virtue.</p>
<p>When we do wrong, we are cursed and must seek forgiveness.</p> <p><i>Deuteronomy 28:15</i> “But it shall come to pass, if you do not obey</p>	<p>When we do wrong, we are already forgiven by the one-time sacrifice of Jesus. We are no longer under ANY curse.</p>

<p><i>the voice of the LORD your God, to observe carefully all His commandments and His statutes which I command you today, that all these curses will come upon you and overtake you...”</i></p>	<p>1 John 1:7 <i>But if we walk in the light as He is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanses us from all sin.</i></p> <p>Galatians 3:13-14 <i>Christ has redeemed us from the curse of the law, having become a curse for us (for it is written, “Cursed is everyone who hangs on a tree”), ¹⁴ that the blessing of Abraham might come upon the Gentiles in Christ Jesus, that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith.</i></p>
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VIII. If we aren’t guided or led by the Law, not even the Ten Commandments, then how do we know right from wrong? How do we know what to do?

A. The grace of God (not the law) teaches us.

Titus 2:11-14

*For the **grace of God** that brings salvation has appeared to all men, ¹² **teaching us** that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in the present age, ¹³ looking for the blessed hope and glorious appearing of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ, ¹⁴ who gave Himself for us, that He might redeem us from every lawless deed and purify for Himself His own special people, zealous for good works.*

B. The Spirit of God (not the law) leads us.

Romans 8:1-17

There is therefore now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus, who do not walk according to the flesh, but according to the Spirit. ² For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has made me free from the law of sin and death. ³ For what the law could not do in that it was weak through the flesh, God did by sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, on account of sin: He condemned sin in the flesh, ⁴ that the righteous requirement of the law might be fulfilled in us who do not walk according to the flesh but according to the Spirit.... ⁸ So then, those who are in the flesh cannot please God. ⁹ But you are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if indeed the Spirit of God dwells in you. Now if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he is not His...¹⁴ For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God. ¹⁵ For you did not receive the spirit of bondage again to fear, but you received the Spirit of adoption by whom we cry out, “Abba, Father.” ¹⁶ The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God, ¹⁷ and if children, then heirs—heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ, if indeed we suffer with Him, that we may also be glorified together.

1. “The law of sin and death” is in reference to the law, specifically to the commandments (see chapter 7). We are free from the law. That is why there is no condemnation (no negative sentence against us).
2. The righteous requirement of the law is fulfilled in us because we walk according to the Spirit. We are not in the flesh because the Spirit of God dwells in us.
3. “The spirit of bondage” is in reference to the law. We did not get saved in order to follow the law again. We were born again to receive the Spirit of adoption. We are now children of God.
4. Because we are children of God WE ARE LEAD BY THE SPIRIT...NOT THE LAW.

C. He writes His new covenant laws in our hearts.

Hebrews 8:7-13

For if that first covenant⁷ had been faultless, then no place would have been sought for a second⁸. ⁸ Because finding fault with them, He says: “Behold, the days are coming, says the LORD, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah— ⁹ not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day when I took them by the hand to lead them out of the land of Egypt; because they did not continue in My covenant, and I disregarded them, says the LORD. ¹⁰ For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, says the LORD: I will put My laws in their mind and write them on their hearts; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people. ¹¹ None of them shall teach his neighbor, and none his brother, saying, ‘Know the LORD,’ for all shall know Me, from the least of them to the greatest of them. ¹² For I will be merciful to their unrighteousness, and their sins and their lawless deeds I will remember no more.” ¹³ In that He says, “A new covenant,” He has made the first obsolete. Now what is becoming obsolete and growing old is ready to vanish away.

1. Many have speculated that when it says, “I will put my laws in their mind and write them on their hearts,” that this is referring to the Ten Commandments. We disagree.
2. Notice the context of Hebrews 8. He is discussing the Old and New Covenant. He declares He will write a NEW Covenant that is NOT according to the Old. This is entirely NEW. The Old Covenant was based on the Ten Commandments. The Ten Commandments were according to the Old. The Old is obsolete.
3. Why would God, who calls the Ten Commandments the “ministry of death” and the “ministry of condemnation” upon which the OLD Covenant was based, write these laws in our mind and hearts? This would make God guilty of teaching “another gospel”!!! Of course not!
4. He does not write the Old Covenant laws in our hearts; rather, He writes the New Covenant law in our hearts.

⁷ Referring to the Old Covenant
⁸ Referring to the New Covenant

5. Then, what is the New Covenant Law that God writes in our hearts? On the night that Jesus was betrayed, he spoke of the NEW commandment. This would be the NEW commandment for the NEW covenant (just as the Ten Commandments were given as the Old Covenant). The new commandment of the new covenant is that we love one another as He loved us.

Mark 14:23-24

Then He took the cup, and when He had given thanks He gave it to them, and they all drank from it. ²⁴ And He said to them, "This is My blood of the new covenant, which is shed for many.

John 13:34-35

A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another; as I have loved you, that you also love one another. ³⁵ By this all will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another."

John 15:9-17

"As the Father loved Me, I also have loved you; abide in My love.¹⁰ If you keep My commandments, you will abide in My love, just as I have kept My Father's commandments and abide in His love.¹¹ "These things I have spoken to you, that My joy may remain in you, and that your joy may be full. ¹² This is My commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you. ¹³ Greater love has no one than this, than to lay down one's life for his friends. ¹⁴ You are My friends if you do whatever I command you. ¹⁵ No longer do I call you servants, for a servant does not know what his master is doing; but I have called you friends, for all things that I heard from My Father I have made known to you. ¹⁶ You did not choose Me, but I chose you and appointed you that you should go and bear fruit, and that your fruit should remain, that whatever you ask the Father in My name He may give you. ¹⁷ These things I command you, that you love one another.

6. We believe that the New Covenant is based on Jesus' ONE command and the Father's commandment to believe on the Son.

1 John 3:21-23

Beloved, if our heart does not condemn us, we have confidence toward God.²² And whatever we ask we receive from Him, because we keep His commandments and do those things that are pleasing in His sight.²³ And this is His commandment: that we should believe on the name of His Son Jesus Christ and love one another, as He gave us commandment.

VERY GOOD NEWS!

We are not under the Old Covenant.

We are not under the Old Covenant Laws.

We are under the New Covenant.

We have new commandments: Believe in Jesus and love one another.

When we keep His commandments, whatever we ask from Him, we will receive.

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