

LAW OF GOD

FIRST THINGS FIRST

Take a minute to pray for God to guide you as you study...

I still remember the blue lights flashing in my rearview mirror. I was getting pulled over for speeding! The police officer came to my window and asked why I was in such a hurry. I didn't have a good enough reason, because he ended up writing me a ticket. At the bottom of the ticket was a date and time for my court appearance. On that Tuesday afternoon, I put on a nice shirt and tie and walked into the court room. There were many other people there, some in orange jumpsuits and handcuffs, others in jeans and t-shirts. As I looked around the room, I saw the court reporters, the baliff, and finally, the judge came out. It was terrifying! Would he be nice? Would he make me pay my ticket? Would he throw me in jail? I really didn't know what he was going to do. The only thing I knew for sure was that I had been speeding, I had broken the law, and I had to pay for my speeding!

Have you ever broken a law? What is the point of laws anyway? Do they exist just to get us in trouble? And aren't laws made to be broken?

God gave us laws as well. His laws are pretty incredible, because they don't ever change like some laws that we see in America. David describes how permanent God's laws are in this verse:

Psalms 111:7-8 says, "The works of his hands are faithful and just; all his _____ (laws) are trustworthy. They are established for _____ and _____..."

God's laws NEVER change! They last from the day they were created until forever and ever... God gave us His laws in the ten commandments. They are ten laws that He wrote with His very finger into stone tablets that he gave to Moses on Mount Sinai as the children of Israel were walking through the desert. (Take a minute to read through the ten commandments found in Exodus 20:3-17) What did you think? Do these laws sound like major bummers? Do you feel like they will hold you back in life?

God's laws weren't actually given to us to hold us down and be a burden on us. They were given to us for a specific purpose. Listen to how Paul talks about the purpose of the law.

Romans 3:20: "...through the _____ we become conscious of _____."

The law was given to us to help us know when we are sinning, or going against God's will for our lives. Think of it this way: if there were no speed limits, no one would know that they were going too fast for the road they were driving. The speed limit tells us what is a safe speed for where we are headed.

God's laws are for the same purpose, to show us the safest place to be and the safest way to live. They should not be a burden, because they are there to help you and protect you.

BASIC POINT

God gave us laws to **help** and **protect** us and to give us **happiness** and **joy!**

It's kind of like this. Imagine yourself married with a couple kids. You've got the perfect life, great job, awesome house. It's like life can't get any better. Well, you suddenly start noticing your neighbor. They are HOT! So, you decide to go to their house and have an affair with them. All of a sudden, your perfect life gets wrecked as your spouse no longer wants to be married to you. Your kids are split between two parents. You have to move out of your amazing house. All this stress in your life makes you lose your job. And you went from a perfect life to a miserable one, all because you didn't follow God's law of not coveting (See Exodus 20:17). His laws are given to us to help us and protect us. They are given to us to give us happiness and joy!

I love how David shares his love for God's laws as he writes in this next verse.

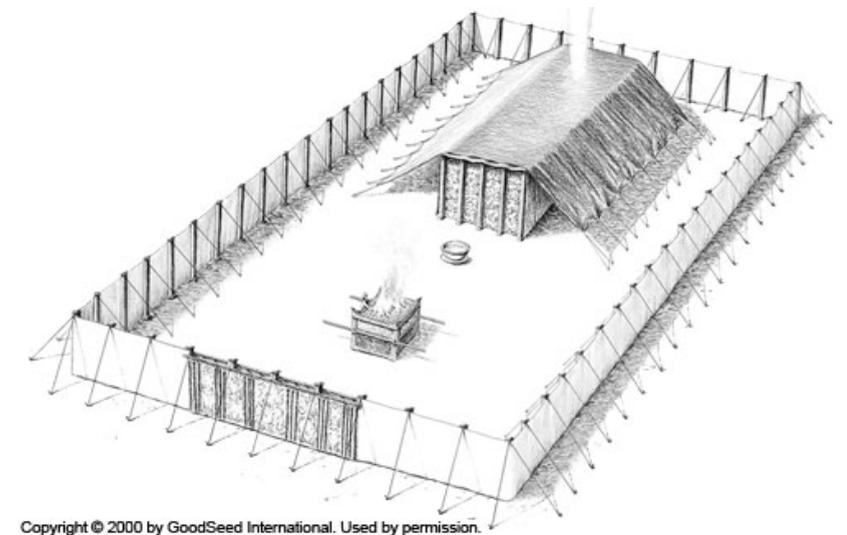
Psalms 119:16: "I _____ in Your _____ (law)"

To David, God's laws were protection and comfort. They were a blessing! They helped him know the best path for his life. And God's laws, that are eternal and never change, show us the best path for our life too. Here's the thing: if we go against God's law, we aren't just missing out on the best way to live. We are actually SINNING!

1 John 3:4 "Everyone who sins breaks the _____; in fact, sin is lawlessness."

When we go against God, we are sinning, and if you remember, when we sin, we deserve death. That leads us to something even bigger!

In the Old Testament (the first half of the Bible), the Israelites built a special house for God to live in while they were traveling in the desert. It was called the Sanctuary. Here's what it looked like:



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The Sanctuary was a place for God to live, and a place for humans to connect with Him. It was also a place for humans to confess, repent and ask for forgiveness for when they did not live up to God's law.

Throughout the year (monthly and especially on one special day called the Day of Atonement), each person would have an opportunity to admit to their mistakes and repent from their sin. This is how it would work. They would bring a lamb, one that was perfect, without any issues or problems, to the Sanctuary. Then, they would hand it to the priest. They would place their hands on top of the head of the lamb and confess their sin (where they didn't live up to God's law). Then, the priest would hand them the knife, and they would have to cut the throat of the lamb. Pretty gross, right? Can you imagine having to do that because of your sin? I bet if we had to kill a lamb once a month because of our sin, we would want to never sin again either! Symbolically, the sins would be transferred over to the lamb who would then take the punishment for the sinner. Because of sin, someone has to die. That's the punishment that comes with sin...death. And although it is pretty sad, it's really a beautiful picture of Jesus and His gift to us.

The Sanctuary was designed to show us the Lamb, a.k.a. **JESUS!** He IS the Lamb! John the Baptist described Him that way as He shows up to be baptized. Listen to the words he chooses in this verse...

John 1:29: "Look, the _____ of God, who takes away the _____ of the world!"

That's why Jesus came, to take away the sins of the world! He's the Lamb of God, and He's the one that takes away our sins. Because of Jesus, we no longer have to kill a lamb when we sin. Jesus, the Lamb, already died for our sins. So, all we have to do is ask for forgiveness, and accept the death of Jesus, and we are forgiven.

"So if all we have to do when we sin is ask for forgiveness, then why does it matter if I keep God's laws?"

That's a great question! But, it's not about "KEEPING" God's laws. Doing something right for the sake of doing something right is dumb. So here are a couple reason why we keep God's laws.

#1: We keep God's laws because they are FOR us to help us and protect us. God's laws are given to us for OUR benefit, so we keep them so that we can experience a happy and healthy life.

#2: We keep God's laws because He asks us to. It sounds funny, but sometimes you choose to do something because it is asked of you. Sometimes you obey, just because you were asked!

#3: We keep God's laws because we love Him. When we obey God's request, we are showing our love for Him. In fact, God says it pretty plainly to us:

John 14:15: "If you love Me, _____ my commandments."

When we keep God's laws, we are showing Him and the rest of the world that WE LOVE HIM! We don't keep His laws to make us holy or better than anyone else. The only thing that can make us holy is Jesus! Keeping the law doesn't give us salvation, but it does show the world that we love the One that CAN give us salvation through His death.

#4: God's people keep His commandments.

Revelation 14:12: "This calls for patient endurance on the part of the people of God who keep his _____ and remain faithful to Jesus."

At the end of time, there will be a group of faithful people that choose to keep God's laws and show their love for Him. I want to be in that group. Do you?

FUNDAMENTAL QUESTIONS

1. What is your opinion about keeping God's laws?
2. Why is it hard to keep God's laws?
3. What would make it easier for you to obey God and keep His laws??

