

# So Why did God Give the Law?

## Romans 7:7–13 (NKJV)

<sup>7</sup> What shall we say then? *Is* the law sin? Certainly not! On the contrary, I would not have known sin except through the law. For I would not have known covetousness unless the law had said, “*You shall not covet.*”<sup>8</sup> But sin, taking opportunity by the commandment, produced in me *all manner of evil* desire. For apart from the law sin *was* dead.<sup>9</sup> I was alive once without the law, but when the commandment came, sin revived and I died.<sup>10</sup> And the commandment, which *was* to *bring* life, I found to *bring* death.<sup>11</sup> For sin, taking occasion by the commandment, deceived me, and by it killed *me*.<sup>12</sup> Therefore the law *is* holy, and the commandment holy and just and good.

<sup>13</sup> Has then what is good become death to me? Certainly not! But sin, that it might appear sin, was producing death in me through what is good, so that sin through the commandment might become exceedingly sinful.

## Introduction:

The Law was given directly to Moses and is found recorded in the Old Testament books of Exodus, Leviticus, and Deuteronomy. This legal code issued by God can be divided into three sections.

### The Moral Law

The first section is the *moral* law, which is how to live a godly life or how to pursue personal holiness. It is rooted and grounded in the Ten Commandments. These moral laws are still in effect today with one minor exception.

In the New Testament, Paul makes his case that children are still to obey their parents in Ephesians 6:1-3 by quoting the Law issued in Exodus 20:12. We still must honor our father (Ephesians 6:4). Believers must still tell the truth under the New Covenant (Matthew 5:37). We are not to steal. We are not to covet. In Romans 13:8-10, Paul argues that we are to love one another, and he quotes the Law from Exodus 20:13-17, in order to bind the conscience of New Testament believers. We must have no other gods before God Almighty. We must

not take the Lord's name in vain. We must not make something to aid our worship of God. If anyone says those commandments are not still in effect, they are dead wrong. The moral law of God is still in effect and are binding upon His people.

### The Ceremonial Law

Second, there is the *ceremonial* law, which is the sacrificial system made up of the high priest, priests, sacrifices, offerings, the day of atonement, a scapegoat, and the rest. The ceremonial law was fulfilled in the life and death of the Lord Jesus Christ. He abolished the ceremonial law. That is why we do not attend churches today where a pastor cuts the throat of a lamb, lays it on the altar, and sprinkles its blood on the mercy seat. Christ was both our high priest and our sacrificial Lamb as He offered Himself upon the cross to make atonement for our sins (John 1:29). Everything in the Law, as it related to the ceremonial sacrifice, was to be a foreshadowing of the coming of Christ. The ceremonial law was fulfilled in the life and death of Jesus Christ. It is no longer in effect.

### The Civil Law

The third aspect of the Law, the *civil* law, concerns how God's people were to function as a society

under the theocracy of the nation of Israel in the Promised Land. That part of the Law is not binding upon believers outside of the Promised Land without a king of Israel ruling over us. However, there is much for us to learn from the civil law. Our whole western system of jurisprudence is based upon the timeless principles based upon the civil law issued to Moses. For example, the death penalty should be still in effect. If you take someone else's life, then your life should to be taken by the government. In Romans 13, we will we see that God has given the sword to the government to use to be an avenger of the wrongdoer. The sword of capital punishment is still in the hands of the civil government.

When you talk about the Law, you must break it down into these three divisions – the moral, ceremonial, and civil distinctions – or else it will be very confusing.

### Uses of the Law

Coming out of the Reformation, John Calvin articulated three specific uses of the law. The *first* use was to give the knowledge of sin. We may know that we are sinners because we have been measured by the Law and shown to fall short of the glory of God. Romans 3:20 says, “through the law

comes the knowledge of sin.” That is why we should use the law in our evangelism. That is why Jesus used the Law in His evangelism with the rich young ruler, who asked what he must do to inherit eternal life. Jesus said to keep the commandments. In our evangelism classes, we would never say that to someone, but Jesus did. The intent was to reveal the knowledge of sin to the rich young ruler.

The *second* use of the Law was to establish law and order in society. No society can survive without law and order. There must be a standard for right and wrong. This is found in the moral law of God. I understand that in the United States, we are not a Christian nation. But we must have some standard of what is right and what is wrong. It can be found, in synopsis, in the second half of the Ten Commandments. It establishes the home, the work ethic, truthfulness and honesty, and more. This is why during the Reformation there was the reestablishment of the Protestant work ethic. People became productive, prolific workers as a result of the Reformation because they preached the Law.

The *third* use of the Law was to guide believers in Christian living. This is the divinely-marked path of sanctification. It reveals the heart of the moral will of

God. It is not something to discard. If you discard the moral law, you just discarded the roadmap that leads to personal holiness. It is the lamp that reveals the narrow path, showing the essential benchmarks in how to live a life that honors God.

I will add a *fourth* use of the Law, which is, it gives the knowledge of God. We know what God is like by reading the Ten Commandments. In the Law, we see that He is sovereign. He has the right to impose law upon us. He is the authority over our lives. In the Law, we see the holiness of God, because in it He makes distinctions between what is good and what is evil. In the Law, we see the love of God, because He is pointing us in the direction of His blessing. It will lead you into fuller expressions of God's blessing. But if you go away from the Law in disobedience, you will experience God's loving discipline. In the Law, we see the sufficiency of God, that if you will not covet, but work hard, He will provide for your needs.

### Two Dangerous Extremes

In the church today, there are two extremes that Christians can fall into when thinking about the Law. One extreme is legalism, which comes in many different shapes and forms. It is much like saying

“Baptist” today, which can cover everything from A to Z. There are three main ways to break down legalism.

Number one is that you have to keep the Law in order to be saved. Paul has repudiated that position so thoroughly that none of us should be in danger of thinking that we have to keep the Law in order to be made right before God. However, that is one extreme form of legalism.

Number two is to believe you have to keep the ceremonial or civil law in order to be sanctified. There are some Christian teachers who pull ideas from Exodus, Leviticus, and Deuteronomy and want to impose them upon the daily lives of believers. We must understand that that part of the Law has been abolished.

Number three is where people add more commandments to the Law. They come up with their own traditions and preferences, but they do not have a biblical chapter or verse for their standards. They claim that someone must wear certain clothing, not dance, not wear certain jewelry, but they have no explicit biblical text to substantiate their claims. That is all legalism. There is no biblical premise for their

man-made rules. It is fine if you want to personally live that way. But if they impose it on someone else, saying they are not a good Christian if they do those things, they are a card-carrying legalist. If they have no biblical support, they have added to the Law.

The other extreme, which is the complete opposite to legalism, is antinomianism. The Greek prefix “anti” means ‘against’ or ‘in opposition to.’ “Nomian” comes from the Greek word *nomas*, which means ‘law.’ So antinomianism means a person is against the Law. He is on the other side of the theological spectrum from the legalist. He is against the moral law. Antinomians believe they have a free license to live however they want to live. If you ever say the word “obedience,” people in these churches rise up against you, calling you a legalist. They believe they are free in Christ to live however they want to live. That is absolute nonsense. Yet there are pockets of antinomianism in the body of Christ. This is not a straw man position or hypothetical extreme.

Steve Lawson



By New Testament times, Jewish rabbis had summed up scriptural law in 613 commandments, comprised of 248 mandates and 365 prohibitions. The mandates related to such things as worship, the Temple, sacrifices, vows, rituals, donations, sabbaths, animals used for food, festivals, community affairs, war, social issues, family responsibilities, judicial matters, legal rights and obligations, and slavery. The prohibitions related to such things as idolatry, historical lessons, blasphemy, Temple worship, sacrifices, the priesthood, diet, vows, agriculture, loans, business, slaves, justice, and personal relationships.

To those scriptural laws the rabbis had added countless adjuncts, conditions, and practical interpretations. The attempt to fulfill all the laws and traditions became a consuming way of life for legalistic Jews such as the Pharisees. At the Jerusalem Council, Peter described that extreme legalism as “a yoke which neither our fathers nor we have been able to bear” (Acts 15:10).

As far as the divinely-revealed laws were concerned, it is clear why faithful Jews tried to keep them in every detail. Through Moses, God had declared, “Cursed is he who does not confirm the

words of this law by doing them” (Deut. 27:26). The next chapter of Deuteronomy specifies some of the severe consequences of disobedience, consequences that affected virtually every area of life:

**Deut. 28:15-22**

But it shall come about, if you will not obey the Lord your God, to observe to do all His commandments and His statutes with which I charge you today that all these curses shall come upon you and overtake you. Cursed shall you be in the city, and cursed shall you be in the country. Cursed shall be your basket and your kneading bowl. Cursed shall be the offspring of your body and the produce of your ground, the increase of your herd and the young of your flock. Cursed shall you be when you come in, and cursed shall you be when you go out. The Lord will send upon you curses, confusion, and rebuke, in all you undertake to do, until you are destroyed and until you perish quickly, on account of the evil of your deeds, because you have forsaken Me. The Lord will make the pestilence cling to you until He has consumed you from the land, where you are entering to possess it. The Lord will smite you with consumption and with fever and with inflammation

and with fiery heat and with the sword and with blight and with mildew, and they shall pursue you until you perish. (28:15–22)

As an apostle of Jesus Christ, Paul reiterated the truth that “for as many as are of the works of the Law are under a curse; for it is written, ‘Cursed is everyone who does not abide by all things written in the book of the law, to perform them’ ” (Gal. 3:10; cf. Deut. 27:26). James declared that “whoever keeps the whole law and yet stumbles in one point, he has become guilty of all” (James 2:10).

Why, one wonders, did God give His chosen people a law that was impossible for them to keep? His purpose was not only to reveal the standard of righteousness by which the saved are to live but also to show them the impossibility of living it without His power and to show them the depth of their sinfulness when honestly measured against the law. The law was not given to show men how good they could be but how good they could not be.

Following his quotation from Deuteronomy 27:26 mentioned above, Paul told the Galatians, “Now that no one is justified by the Law before God is evident” (Gal. 3:11*a*). To substantiate that truth he quoted another Old Testament passage that declared that “the righteous man shall live by

faith” (v. 11*b*; cf. Hab. 2:4). The law was given to establish God’s standard and to reveal to men the utter impossibility of their achieving that standard of righteousness and their consequent need for forgiveness and for trusting in God’s goodness and mercy. As Hebrews 11 makes clear, both before and after the giving of the Mosaic law, those who became acceptable to God were those who trusted in His righteousness rather than their own.

Jesus condemned the Pharisees for their failure to understand that truth (Luke 18:9). Paul, once the consummate Pharisee (Phil. 3:4–6), came to clearly understand that reality after his conversion. He testified to the Philippian believers: “Whatever things were gain to me, those things I have counted as loss ... in order that I may gain Christ, and may be found in Him, not having a righteousness of my own derived from the Law, but that which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness which comes from God on the basis of faith” (Phil. 3:7–9).

MacArthur, J. F., Jr. (1991). *Romans* (Vol. 1, pp. 366–367). Chicago: Moody Press.

## **A few technical notes**

Enormous controversy has surrounded Paul’s exact meaning in the remainder of chapter 7.

In particular there has been a great deal of discussion about whether Paul is concerned here with his own spiritual history, or with that of Jews, or of Christians, or of people in general,<sup>34</sup> and, if himself or other Christians, whether he is referring to the experience of the regenerate or the unregenerate.

It is probable that such questions will never be answered to the satisfaction of everyone.

Morris, L. (1988). *The Epistle to the Romans* (p. 276). Grand Rapids, MI; Leicester, England: W.B. Eerdmans; Inter-Varsity Press.

A Few points should be noted,

**1.** It is obvious that Paul is talking about the Law and his/our relationship to it.

Paul mentions the word law/commandment 25 times

**2.** It is clear that Paul is referring to himself because he uses the first person singular pronoun repeatedly and sometimes the emphatic Pronoun.

**Romans 7:24–25 (NKJV)**

<sup>24</sup> O wretched man that I am! Who will deliver me from this body of death? <sup>25</sup> I thank

God—through Jesus Christ our Lord!

So then, with the mind I myself serve the law of God, but with the flesh the law of sin.

As C. E. Raven put it, ” .... St. Paul does not write at second-hand, but shares with us the intimacy of his own spiritual struggle

Morris, L. (1988). [The Epistle to the Romans](#) (p. 277). Grand Rapids, MI; Leicester, England: W.B. Eerdmans; Inter-Varsity Press.

The emotional content found throughout the passage points to personal involvement.

Morris, L. (1988). [The Epistle to the Romans](#) (p. 277). Grand Rapids, MI; Leicester, England: W.B. Eerdmans; Inter-Varsity Press.

**3.** It is also important to note that Paul sometimes has used the Personal pronoun “I” to be inclusive of others

Thus he writes to the Corinthians, “If I speak in the tongues of men and of angels, but have not love ...” (1 Cor. 13:1), where it is impossible to hold that he means the words to apply to himself only

Morris, L. (1988). [The Epistle to the Romans](#) (p. 277). Grand Rapids, MI; Leicester, England: W.B. Eerdmans; Inter-Varsity Press.

## Our conclusion is

1. Paul is speaking about himself

2. Paul is at times including others in the “I”

Paul, then, is describing his confrontation with the law, but doing so representatively

Morris, L. (1988). [The Epistle to the Romans](#) (p. 277). Grand Rapids, MI; Leicester, England: W.B. Eerdmans; Inter-Varsity Press.

### 3. Paul is speaking of a Pre-conversion experience

#### **Romans 7:7 (NKJV)**

<sup>7</sup> What shall we say then? *Is* the law sin? Certainly not! On the contrary, I would not have known sin except through the law. For I would not have known covetousness unless the law had said, “*You shall not covet.*”

#### **Romans 7:8–9 (NKJV)**

<sup>8</sup> But sin, taking opportunity by the commandment, produced in me all *manner of evil* desire. For apart from the law sin was dead. <sup>9</sup> I was alive once without the law, but when the commandment came, sin revived and I died.

### 4. Paul is speaking of the Current Condition as a Christian

#### **Romans 7:15 (NKJV)**

<sup>15</sup> For what I am doing, I do not understand. For what I will to do, that I do not practice; but what I hate, that I do.

**Romans 7:17 (NKJV)**

<sup>17</sup> But now, it is no longer I who do it, but sin that dwells in me.

**Romans 7:22 (NKJV)**

<sup>22</sup> For I delight in the law of God according to the inward man.

**Romans 7:24 (NKJV)**

<sup>24</sup> O wretched man that I am! Who will deliver me from this body of death?

**Lesson**

- I. The Good
- II. The Bad
- III. The Ugly



# I. The Good

<sup>7</sup> What shall we say then? *Is the law sin? Certainly not! On the contrary, I would not have known sin except through the law. For I would not have known covetousness unless the law had said, “You shall not covet.”*

<sup>7</sup> Τί οὖν ἐροῦμεν; ὁ νόμος ἁμαρτία; μὴ γένοιτο· ἀλλὰ τὴν ἁμαρτίαν οὐκ ἔγνων εἰ μὴ διὰ νόμου, τὴν τε γὰρ ἐπιθυμίαν οὐκ ᾔδειν εἰ μὴ ὁ νόμος ἔλεγεν· Οὐκ ἐπιθυμήσεις

Harris, W. H., III. (2010). *The Lexham Greek-English Interlinear New Testament: SBL Edition* (Ro 7:7). Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press.

<sup>7</sup> What shall we say then? *Is the law sin?*

<sup>7</sup> What shall we say then?

The argument advances with a couple of **rhetorical questions**. *What shall we say, then?* is a deliberative device Paul has used before an expression the apostle uses **six times** in Romans,

Morris, L. (1988). *The Epistle to the Romans* (p. 278). Grand Rapids, MI; Leicester, England: W.B. Eerdmans; Inter-Varsity Press.

Kruse, C. G. (2012). *Paul's Letter to the Romans*. (D. A. Carson, Ed.) (p. 299). Cambridge, U.K.; Nottingham, England; Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company; Apollos.

**Romans 6:1 (NKJV)**

**6 What shall we say then?** Shall we continue in sin that grace may abound?

**Romans 9:14 (NKJV)**

**14 What shall we say then?** *Is there* unrighteousness with God? Certainly not!

Paul usually employs this when he is anticipating being misunderstood, or the audience coming to the wrong conclusion.

And in this case he believes that they may think that the law is evil or sin since he has made statements like

**Romans 5:20 (NKJV)**

**20 Moreover the law entered that the offense might abound.** But where sin abounded, grace abounded much more,

**Romans 6:14 (NKJV)**

<sup>14</sup> For sin shall not have dominion over you, **for you are not under law** but under grace.

Romans 7:4 (NKJV)

<sup>4</sup> 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.

**Romans 7:5–6** (NKJV)

<sup>5</sup> 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. <sup>6</sup> **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.

Also add to this that

For the Jew the law was central,  
and Paul has denied that the Jew was right.

**1** He has said that in any case the Jew has broken the law (2:27).

**2** He has denied that anyone is justified by the law (3:20).

Where does that leave the law?  
Is the Christian to regard it as something evil and discard it?

Or is it still God's law?

## Is the Law of God still viable

Was the law given by God through Moses actually evil?” they would wonder. “And can Christians now disregard the standards of the law and live as they please?”

MacArthur, J. F., Jr. (1991). *Romans* (Vol. 1, p. 367). Chicago: Moody Press.

So Paul asked.

**7** What shall we say then? Is the law sin? Certainly not!

Paul gives the suggestion an emphatic negation, *Not at all!* (Moffatt, “Never!”; RSV, “By no means”).<sup>19</sup> It is Paul’s most emphatic repudiation of any idea to which it refers. He will have nothing to do with the suggestion

Morris, L. (1988). *The Epistle to the Romans* (p. 155). Grand Rapids, MI; Leicester, England: W.B. Eerdmans; Inter-Varsity Press.

The law not only is not sinful but continues to have great value for the Christian by convicting him of sin. In 7:7b–13, Paul gives four elements of the convicting work of God’s law:

- 1 it reveals sin (v. 7b),
  - 2 it arouses sin (v. 8),
  - 3 it ruins the sinner (vv. 9–11),
- and it reflects the absolute sinfulness of sin (vv. 12–13)

MacArthur, J. F., Jr. (1991). *Romans* (Vol. 1, pp. 367–368). Chicago: Moody Press.

<sup>7</sup> What shall we say then? *Is the law sin? Certainly not! On the contrary, I would not have known sin except through the law. For I would not have known covetousness unless the law had said, “You shall not covet.”*

*7 On the contrary, I would not have known sin except through the law.*

*ἀλλά—On the contrary,*

allá (typically a strong adversative conjunction) – but (but instead), nevertheless, on the contrary. [235](#) (allá), the neuter plural of [243](#) /állos ("other"), literally means "otherwise" or "on the other hand" (Abbott-Smith).

**On the contrary**, Paul says, just the opposite is true. It is outrageous and blasphemous even to suggest that anything God commands could be deficient in the least way, much less sinful

MacArthur, J. F., Jr. (1991). *Romans* (Vol. 1, p. 368). Chicago: Moody Press.

*v7 I would not have known sin except through the law.*

Reiterating the terms of the question, Paul neatly reverses the placement of the articles, with “sin” now carrying the article, and “law” not: ἀλλὰ τὴν ἁμαρτίαν οὐκ ἔγνων εἰ μὴ διὰ νόμου (“nevertheless I did not know *the sin* except through [a] *law*”). The article with “sin” implies the topic or subject of sin, which would not have come to Paul’s attention except for the limit posed by the concept of law. The anarthrous wording of “a law” implies an intellectual and emotional process of a matter coming to awareness, and the second aorist verb in the first person singular strongly suggests that Paul is here explaining his earlier moral development

Jewett, R., & Kotansky, R. D. (2006). *Romans: A commentary*. (E. J. Epp, Ed.) (p. 446). Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press.

By being perfect itself, however, God’s law does *reveal* man’s imperfection. **I would not have come**

**to know sin**, Paul goes on to explain, **except through the Law**. In other words, because God has disclosed His divine standards of righteousness, men are able more accurately to identify **sin**, which is failure to meet those standards.

MacArthur, J. F., Jr. (1991). [Romans](#) (Vol. 1, p. 368). Chicago: Moody Press.

R C Sproul,

“How shall we understand what sin is unless we have some standard of righteousness enabling us to differentiate between good and evil? Without law there is no sin; without commandments there can be no transgressions. We define sin as any want of conformity to, or transgression of, the law. Sin by definition depends on some kind of standard by which performance and behaviour is measured. So it is through the law that sin is made known. It is not that there would have been nothing evil without a law, but we would never have known what sin was.”

Sproul, R. C. (1994). [The Gospel of God: An Exposition of Romans](#) (p. 121). Great Britain: Christian Focus Publications.

The apostle has already mentioned or alluded to that truth several times in the epistle

**Romans 3:20 (NKJV)**

<sup>20</sup> Therefore by the deeds of the law no flesh will be justified in His sight, for by the law *is* the knowledge of sin.

**Romans 4:15 (NKJV)**

<sup>15</sup> because the law brings about wrath; for where there is no law *there is* no transgression.

**Romans 5:13 (NKJV)**

<sup>13</sup> (For until the law sin was in the world, but sin is not imputed when there is no law.

**1 Corinthians 15:56 (NKJV)**

<sup>56</sup> ..., and the strength of sin *is* the law.

Paul does not mean that people without the law do not know sin at all; he has said the opposite (2:14–15; 5:12–14).

**Romans 2:14–15 (NKJV)**

<sup>14</sup> for when Gentiles, who do not have the law, by nature do the things in the law, these, although not having the law, are a law to themselves, <sup>15</sup> who show the work of the law written in their hearts, their conscience also bearing witness, and between



themselves *their* thoughts accusing or else excusing *them*)

### **Romans 5:12–14 (NKJV)**

<sup>12</sup> Therefore, just as through one man sin entered the world, and death through sin, and thus death spread to all men, because all sinned—<sup>13</sup> (For until the law sin was in the world, but sin is not imputed when there is no law. <sup>14</sup> Nevertheless death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over those who had not sinned according to the likeness of the transgression of Adam, who is a type of Him who was to come.

All people have some idea of right and wrong; a moral code of some sort is almost universal. People who do not have the law may well know that they have done wrong. But people without God's law do not see wrongdoing as it really is, as sin against God. There is a great difference between the breaching of a human moral code and sin, that evil thing which God forbids. It takes the law to show wrongdoing to be sin. And to see my misdeeds as sin against God inevitably means that I am troubled and begin to see my need of a Savior. There is a

healing function in the law's work of convicting the sinner.

Morris, L. (1988). *The Epistle to the Romans* (pp. 278–279). Grand Rapids, MI; Leicester, England: W.B. Eerdmans; Inter-Varsity Press.

v7 I would not have known sin except through the law.

*A note of warning and concern at this point is needed.*

*We are a country that is built on laws, in fact it is built on OT Law.*

*in fact there is a sculpture of the face of Moses in the House of Representatives facing the speaker of the House.*

“a marble relief that has hung in the House chamber since 1950, just two years after the modern state of Israel was founded. The bas relief was sculpted of white Vermont marble by artist Jean de Marco, according to the Architect of the Capitol.

It's part of a series of 23 portraits chosen to represent historical figures who established the legal principles underlying the American system of government. Moses is in the center, facing forward,

with 11 portraits on either side facing right and left toward him.”

Here's the Sculpture of Moses That Netanyahu Referenced  
BY [RYAN TEAGUE BECKWITH](#)  
MARCH 3, 2015

*But we have been and continue to be rapidly divorcing ourselves from the Law of God.*

*We have removed it from our schools, deleted references to it in our literature.*

*We have redefined it, in some churches, unhitched from it.*

*This is how you can have abortion on demand, this is how you can have more and more states allow medically assisted suicide.*

*This is why you can have same sex marriage.*

*This is why you can have the redefining of the male and female genders.*

*This is why you have women marrying their dog and one married a tree.*

*A society that has removed the Law of God has removed its moral compass.*

*The severity of Sin is watered down if not completely removed. It is a dangerous place to be when the only moral code is made by sinful men who love their sin.*

**Romans 1:32 (NKJV)**

<sup>32</sup> .....not only do the same but also approve of those who practice them.

*It is only left with the conscience that God creates but that becomes corrupt with sin and seared to the point of being ineffective.*

*Greater still is the removal of the law from the Gospel both negative and positive.*

***The Negative*** - little if any talk about the transgression of the law and penalty of it. More talk is spent on how God loves you and how the gospel can benefit you in life, marriage, work and money.

**Galatians 3:21–24 (NKJV)**

<sup>21</sup> 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. <sup>22</sup> But the Scripture has confined all under sin, that the promise by faith in Jesus Christ

might be given to those who believe. <sup>23</sup> But before faith came, we were kept under guard by the law, kept for the faith which would afterward be revealed.

<sup>24</sup> Therefore the law was our tutor *to bring us* to Christ, that we might be justified by faith.

***The Positive.*** *little time if any at all is spent on the need to have perfect righteousness . The need to perfectly obey the law. that being good is not enough. You need to be be perfect, 100%.*

### **Philippians 3:8–9 (NKJV)**

<sup>8</sup> 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 <sup>9</sup> 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;

*This is seed bed needed for the Gospel and both are produce by the Law.*

*We need to know how sinful we are  
and*

*We need to know how righteous we need to be.*

<sup>7</sup> What shall we say then? *Is the law sin? Certainly not! On the contrary, I would not have known sin except through the law. For I would not have known covetousness unless the law had said, "You shall not covet."*

*τήν τε γὰρ ἐπιθυμίαν οὐκ ᾔδειν εἰ μὴ ὁ νόμος ἔλεγεν· Οὐκ ἐπιθυμήσεις*

ginōskō – properly, to know, especially through personal experience (first-hand acquaintance). 1097 /ginōskō ("experientially know") is used for example in Lk 1:34, "And Mary [a virgin] said to the angel, 'How will this be since I do not know (1097 /ginōskō = sexual intimacy) a man?'"

The tenth commandment is particularly well suited to his purpose, for it is the only one that explicitly goes beyond the outward action to the inner root of the action, though as we see from the way Jesus handled some of the other commandments, this is the way they should all be interpreted (Matt. 5:21ff.). The noun NIV renders as *what it was to covet* denotes strong desire in general and is occasionally used in the New Testament of good desires (e.g., Luke 22:15). But in the overwhelming number of cases the strong desire is a lust for evil things, and “covet” is a good way of bringing this out. The command is cited from LXX (**Exod. 20:17; Deut. 5:21**), though without the objects there specified.

Morris, L. (1988). *The Epistle to the Romans* (p. 279). Grand Rapids, MI; Leicester, England: W.B. Eerdmans; Inter-Varsity Press.

### **Exodus 20:17** (NKJV)

<sup>17</sup> “You shall not covet your neighbor’s house; you shall not covet your neighbor’s wife, nor his male servant, nor his female servant, nor his ox, nor his donkey, nor anything that *is* your neighbor’s.”

v 7 I would not have **known** sin except through the law.

ἔγνων Aorist Active Indicative

ginóskō – properly, to know, especially through personal experience (first-hand acquaintance). 1097 /ginóskō ("experientially know") is used for example in Lk 1:34, "And Mary [a virgin] said to the angel, 'How will this be since I do not know (1097 /ginóskō = sexual intimacy) a man?'"

For I would not have **known** covetousness unless the law had said, "You shall not covet."

Original Word: οἶδα **Pluperfect** Active IND

Part of Speech: Verb

Transliteration: eidó

Phonetic Spelling: (i'-do)492 eidō (oida)

1492 /eidō ("seeing that becomes knowing") then is a gateway to grasp spiritual truth (reality) from a physical plane. 1492 (eidō) then is physical seeing (sight) which



should be the constant bridge to mental and spiritual seeing (comprehension).

See Dunn, 1:379, “I would not have come to that experience of covetousness which I still have.”

Jewett, R., & Kotansky, R. D. (2006). *Romans: A commentary*. (E. J. Epp, Ed.). Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press.

v7 For I would not have known covetousness unless the law had said, “You shall not covet.”

**τήν** τε γὰρ **ἐπιθυμίαν** οὐκ ἤδειν εἰ μὴ ὁ νόμος ἔλεγεν· Οὐκ ἐπιθυμήσεις

epithymía (from 1909 /epí, "focused on" and 2372 /thymós, "passionate desire") – properly, passion built on strong feelings (urges). These can be positive or negative, depending on whether the desire is inspired by faith (God's inbirthed persuasion). See 1937 (epithymeō).

The verb ἐπιθυμέω and its cognate forms appeared in a variety of contexts in the Greco-Roman world, ranging from desiring good things such as beauty or freedom to

desiring sensual pleasures such as food, alcohol, or sex.<sup>67</sup> For philosophers, ἐπιθυμία was associated with the bestial side of human nature, which should be held in check by the mind; Stoicism listed ἐπιθυμία as one of the four chief passions that must be subdued.

Jewett, R., & Kotansky, R. D. (2006). *Romans: A commentary*. (E. J. Epp, Ed.) (pp. 447–448). Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press.

4 *Macc* 2.6 summarizes the law with the formula μὴ ἐπιθυμεῖν (“you shall not covet”), and Philo refers to coveting as the “fountain of all evils” (ἀπάντων πηγὴ τῶν κακῶν τῶν κακῶν, *Spec.* 4.84) and “desire is the passion to which name ‘originator of evil’ can truly be given” (τὸ γὰρ ἀψευδῶς ἂν λεχθὲν ἀρχέκακον πάθος ἐστὶν ἐπιθυμία, *Spec.* 4.85).

Jewett, R., & Kotansky, R. D. (2006). *Romans: A commentary*. (E. J. Epp, Ed.) (p. 448). Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press.

Augustine concentrates on the seductive power of forbidden fruit to awaken “concupiscence” that rebels against God,

Augustine, of course, interpreted concupiscence as involuntary sexual desire

Jewett, R., & Kotansky, R. D. (2006). *Romans: A commentary*. (E. J. Epp, Ed.) (p. 448). Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press.

Zealous Jews made such claims because rabbinical tradition had modified and externalized the law of God in order to make an acceptable lower lever of obedience humanly attainable. They did not

take into account personal faith in God or the inner condition of the heart. To them, a person who lived up to the outward, observable demands of the rabbinical interpretations of the law became fully acceptable to God.

During his presalvation experience of conviction, Paul came to realize that the most important demands of God's revealed law were not external but internal and that he had failed to meet them

MacArthur, J. F., Jr. (1991). *Romans* (Vol. 1, p. 369). Chicago: Moody Press.

The real battle with sin is internal, in the heart and mind. Counseling, therapy, or even strong will-power often can modify a person's behavior. People may stop drinking by faithfully following the plan of Alcoholics Anonymous or stop lying or cheating by submitting to psychotherapy. But only the transforming power of the Holy Spirit can take a sinful heart and make it pure and acceptable to God. The law's part in that transformation is to make a person aware of his sin and of his need for divine forgiveness and redemption and to set the standard of acceptable morality.

**Charles Hodge wrote,**

The law, although it cannot secure either the justification or sanctification of men, performs an

essential part in the economy of salvation. It enlightens conscience and secures its verdict against a multitude of evils, which we should not otherwise have recognized as sins. It arouses sin, increasing its power, and making it, both in itself and in our consciousness, exceedingly sinful. It therefore produces that state of mind which is a necessary preparation for the reception of the gospel.... Conviction of sin, that is, an adequate knowledge of its nature, and a sense of its power over us, is an indispensable part of evangelical religion. Before the gospel can be embraced as a means of deliverance from sin, we must feel we are involved in corruption and misery. (*Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans* [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, n.d.], p. 226)

Apart from the law, we would have no way of accurately judging our sinfulness. Only God's law reveals His divine standard of righteousness and thereby enables us to see how far short of His righteousness we are and how helpless we are to attain it by our own efforts.

## I. The Good

# II. The Bad

<sup>8</sup> But sin, taking opportunity by the commandment, produced in me all *manner of evil* desire. For apart from the law sin *was* dead.

<sup>8</sup> ἀφορμὴν δὲ λαβοῦσα ἡ ἁμαρτία διὰ τῆς ἐντολῆς κατειργάσατο ἐν ἐμοὶ πᾶσαν ἐπιθυμίαν, χωρὶς γὰρ νόμου ἁμαρτία νεκρά.

Harris, W. H., III. (2010). [The Lexham Greek-English Interlinear New Testament: SBL Edition](#) (Ro 7:7–8). Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press.

I. The Good

II. The Bad

III. The Ugly

**9** I was alive once without the law, but when the commandment came, sin revived and I died. <sup>10</sup> And the commandment, which *was* to *bring* life, I found to *bring* death.

**11** For sin, taking occasion by the commandment, deceived me, and by it killed *me*.

<sup>12</sup> Therefore the law *is* holy, and the commandment holy and just and good.

<sup>13</sup> Has then what is good become death to me? Certainly not! But sin, that it might appear sin, was producing death in me through what is good, so that sin through the commandment might become exceedingly sinful.

<sup>9</sup> ἐγὼ δὲ ἔζων χωρὶς νόμου ποτέ· ἐλθούσης δὲ τῆς ἐντολῆς ἡ ἁμαρτία ἀνέζησεν, <sup>10</sup> ἐγὼ δὲ ἀπέθανον, καὶ εὐρέθη μοι ἡ ἐντολή ἡ εἰς ζωὴν αὕτη εἰς θάνατον· <sup>11</sup> ἡ γὰρ ἁμαρτία ἀφορμὴν λαβοῦσα διὰ τῆς ἐντολῆς ἐξηπάτησέν με καὶ δι' αὐτῆς ἀπέκτεινεν.

<sup>12</sup> ὥστε ὁ μὲν νόμος ἅγιος, καὶ ἡ ἐντολή ἁγία καὶ δικαία καὶ ἀγαθή.

<sup>13</sup> Τὸ οὖν ἀγαθὸν ἐμοὶ ἔγένετο θάνατος; μὴ γένοιτο· ἀλλὰ ἡ ἁμαρτία, ἵνα φανῇ ἁμαρτία διὰ τοῦ ἀγαθοῦ μοι κατεργαζομένη θάνατον· ἵνα γένηται καθ' ὑπερβολὴν ἁμαρτωλὸς ἡ ἁμαρτία διὰ τῆς ἐντολῆς.

Harris, W. H., III. (2010). *The Lexham Greek-English Interlinear New Testament: SBL Edition* (Ro 7:13). Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press.

