



# Law vs Grace

*By David Luff*

In the day in which we live, we often hear the statement from Christians that they do not live under the law but under the grace of God. Whenever any list of “dos” and “don’ts” is presented, the response is, “That is law, and I am no longer bound by the law.” It is as if the moral law of God was a thing of the past, and as Christians we need not be concerned about it any longer. I want to be clear at the beginning of this article that salvation is by the grace of God and the grace of God alone through faith in Jesus Christ. Gal. 2:15-16(NIV) states, “We who are Jews by birth and not ‘Gentile sinners’ know that a man is not justified by observing the law, but by faith in Jesus Christ. So we, too, have put our faith in Christ Jesus that we may be justified by faith in Christ and not by observing the law, because by observing the law no one will be justified.” However, let us not be found in error thinking that the law has no value to us.

Let’s see what the Scripture has to say about the law of God. First of all, what is the moral law of God? It is different from the ceremonial law, which was concerned with dietary and other outward religious and ceremonial requirements. The moral law is that which is described in the Ten Commandments, which God gave to Moses on Mount Sinai along with the instructions for the building of the tabernacle. There are several important things to keep in mind about the law: The law was given by God Himself. Ex 31:18 (KJV), “And he gave unto Moses, when he had made an end of communing with him upon mount Sinai, two tables of testimony, tables of stone, written with the finger of God.”

The law is holy, righteous, good, and spiritual. Psalm 19:7-11(KJV), “The law of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul: the testimony of the Lord is sure,

making wise the simple. The statutes of the Lord are right, rejoicing the heart: the commandment of the Lord is pure, enlightening the eyes. The fear of the Lord is clean, enduring forever: the judgments of the Lord are true and righteous altogether. More to be desired are they than gold, yea, than much fine gold: sweeter also than honey and the honeycomb. Moreover by them is thy servant warned: and in keeping of them there is great reward.”

Romans 7:12,14 (KJV), “Wherefore the law is holy, and the commandment holy, and just, and good. For we know that the law is spiritual: but I am carnal, sold under sin.”

The law is a unit. In other words it must be taken as a whole and not divided. An offense in any part of the law constituted offense against the entire law. James 2:10-11 (KJV), “For whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all. For he that said, Do not commit adultery, said also, Do not kill. Now if thou commit no adultery, yet if thou kill, thou art become a transgressor of the law.”

Jesus approved of the law. Matthew 5:18 (KJV), “For verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled.”

So we see that the moral law of God is good;

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in fact it is perfect. In Ex 19:5-6 (KJV), we see the purpose that God had in mind for the nation of Israel if they would obey His commands fully. “Now therefore, if ye will obey my voice indeed, and keep my covenant, then ye shall be a peculiar treasure unto me above all people: for all the earth is mine: And ye shall be unto me a kingdom of priests, and an holy nation. These are the words which thou shalt speak unto the children of Israel.” The problem was that the Israelites could not keep the law. God wanted the nation of Israel to be a kingdom on the earth in which He would be the King. They would be governed by a law that would make them profoundly different from the other nations of people in the earth. Gen. 12:1-3 (KJV) gives us further insight into God’s plan for Israel. “Now the Lord had said unto Abram, ‘Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father's house, unto a land that I will show thee: And I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee, and make thy name great; and thou shalt be a blessing: And I will bless them that bless thee, and curse him that curseth thee: and in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed.’”

Israel’s history is a testimony to the fact that even with some level of good intentions, they were unable to keep the requirements of the law. We see a repeated cycle of a decline into sin and lawlessness, the punishment of God through their enemies, subsequent repentance, and finally restoration. Unfortunately this cycle was repeated many times. Finally, the existence of Israel as a sovereign nation in the earth came to an end. A remnant, chiefly of the tribe of Judah and the survivors of the priests and Levites returned to the land with the permission of Cyrus and his successors and reestablished temple worship. The New Testament opens with the Jews under Gentile rule as Jesus came onto the scene.

Early in Jesus’ ministry He preaches the Sermon on the Mount. Here the subject of the law comes up again. Jesus says, “Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfill. For verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled” (Matt. 5:17-18). Throughout Matthew Chapter 5, Jesus uses terminology such as “Ye have heard that it was said by them of old time....But I say unto you....” or “It hath been said....But I say unto you....” Jesus was adding a new dimension to the moral law. He was revealing to the people that obedience of the law is not just a matter of outward behavior but about one’s thought life and attitudes of the heart. I can’t help but believe that Jesus, in knowing that since the Jews could not obey the moral law already given, knew they could for certain not obey what he was teaching. He had to be looking ahead to when His Spirit would

come to enable them.

In the Book of Romans, Paul faces the issue of obedience to the law head on. In Chapter 1 Paul says, “The wrath of God is being revealed from heaven against all the godlessness and wickedness of people, who suppress the truth by their wickedness, since what may be known about God is plain to them, because God has made it plain to them. For since the creation of the world God’s invisible qualities—his eternal power and divine nature—have been clearly seen, being understood from what has been made, so that people are without excuse” (Rom. 1:18-20 NIV). Even without the written law, man has sufficient opportunity to know God and His laws from what they can observe in His creation. Therefore, all mankind is without excuse before God. Paul reinforces this again saying, “All who sin apart from the law will also perish apart from the law, and all who sin under the law will be judged by the law. For it is not those who hear the law who are righteous in God’s sight, but it is those who obey the law who will be declared righteous. (Indeed, when Gentiles, who do not have the law, do by nature things required by the law, they are a law for themselves, even though they do not have the law. They show that the requirements of the law are written on their hearts, their consciences also bearing witness, and their thoughts sometimes accusing them and at other times even defending them.) This will take place on the day when God judges people’s secrets through Jesus Christ, as my gospel declares” (Rom 2:12-16 NIV).

Paul is building his case to convince his readers that true righteousness that pleases God cannot be reached by human efforts to obey the law. In Romans Chapter 3, Paul begins to reveal the real purpose of the law. “Now we know that whatever the law says, it says to those who are under the law, so that every mouth may be silenced and the whole world held accountable to God. Therefore no one will be declared righteous in God’s sight by the works of the law; rather, through the law we become conscious of our sin” (Rom 3:19-20 NIV). “Therefore the law was our tutor to bring us to Christ, that we might be justified by faith” (Gal. 3:24 NKJV). “What shall we say, then? Is the law sinful? Certainly not! Nevertheless, I would not have known what sin was had it not been for the law. For I would not have known what coveting really was if the law had not said, ‘You shall not covet.’ But sin, seizing the opportunity afforded by the commandment, produced in me every kind of coveting. For apart from the law, sin was dead” (Rom 7:7-8 NIV). “So the law was put in charge to lead us to Christ that we might be justified by faith” (Gal. 3:24 NIV).

As we can see from these scriptures, the law is good. There is nothing wrong with the law, and it

should not be disdained. “Even though we cannot keep the law, it shows us what sin is. Its purpose is to bring us face-to-face with not only our sin but also our sinful nature. The purpose of the law is to show us our helplessness and bring us to repentance. “Now we know that what things so ever the law saith, it saith to them who are under the law: that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God. Therefore by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight: for by the law is the knowledge of sin” (Rom 3:19-20 KJV). “Therefore, just as sin entered the world through one man, and death through sin, and in this way death came to all people, because all sinned- To be sure, sin was in the world before the law was given, but sin is not charged against anyone’s account where there is no law” (Rom. 5:12-13 NIV).

Paul introduces us to the good news in Romans 1. “For I am not ashamed of the gospel of

Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek. For therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith: as it is written, ‘the just shall live by faith’ ” (Rom 1:16-17 KJV). “But now apart from the law the righteousness of God has been made known, to which the Law and the Prophets testify. This righteousness is given through faith in Jesus Christ to all who believe. There is no difference between Jew and Gentile, for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, and all are justified freely by his grace through the redemption that came by Christ Jesus” (Rom. 3:21-24 NIV).

In no way does the righteousness which comes by faith in Jesus Christ nullify the law. “Do we, then, nullify the law by this faith? Not at all! Rather, we uphold the law” (Rom. 3:31 NIV). However, the righteousness which is of God and which God demands and approves is found completely in Jesus Christ who in His body met every requirement of the law. Therefore, through faith in Christ we receive an imputed righteousness. It is not a righteousness that we personally demonstrate, but it is a righteousness that is credited to us. “What then shall we say that Abraham, our forefather according to the flesh, discovered in this matter? If, in fact, Abraham was justified by works, he had something to boast about—but not before God. What does Scripture say? ‘Abraham believed God, and it was credited to him as righteousness.’ Now to the one who works, wages are not credited as a gift but as an obligation. However, to the one who does not work but trusts God who justifies the ungodly, their faith is credited as righteousness” (Rom. 4:1-5 NIV). “The words ‘it was credited to him’ were written not for him alone, but also for us, to whom God will credit righteousness—for us who believe in him who raised Jesus our Lord from the

dead. He was delivered over to death for our sins and was raised to life for our justification” (Rom 4:23-25 NIV).

This wonderful provision is made available to us through the shed blood of the sinless Son of God. It is given to us by the grace of God. Grace is unmerited favor. We did not earn it through our works of righteousness. We were justified before God through our faith in Christ alone. “But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us” (Rom. 5:8 KJV).

Beginning in Romans Chapter 6, Paul introduces us to the life that should come forth in us as a result of our salvation. “What shall we say, then? Shall we go on sinning so that grace may increase? By no means! We are those who have died to sin; how can we live in it any longer? Or don’t you know that all of us who were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? We were therefore buried with him through baptism into death in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, we too may live a new life” (Rom. 6:1-4). Notice in this passage these phrases; “were baptized,” “were buried,” “was raised.” These were actual events in which we were included. They are stated as historical facts; not as some theoretical supposition. These events are recorded in the history books of heaven. This is what it means to be “in Christ.”

Paul goes on to say “For if we have been united with him in a death like his, we will certainly also be united with him in a resurrection like his. For we know that our old self was crucified with him so that the body ruled by sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves to sin— because anyone who has died has been set free from sin. Now if we died with Christ, we believe that we will also live with him” (Rom. 6:5-8 NIV). Paul continues to emphasize more historical facts that include us. If we were in Christ in His death then we had to be found in Him when He was raised from the dead, and as He lives, we can live in Him. “Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new” (2 Cor. 5:17 KJV).

The remainder of Romans Chapter 6 instructs us that in view of these absolutely true historical facts, we are to serve the cause of Christ with our whole self. “Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord. Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, that ye should obey it in the lusts thereof. Neither yield ye your members as instruments of unrighteousness unto sin: but yield yourselves unto God, as those that are alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness unto God. For sin shall not have dominion over you: for ye

are not under the law, but under grace” (Rom. 6:11-14 KJV). The word “reckon” in verse 11 means to “count” or “come to the conclusion.” It means that given all that has gone before, we have every reason to conclude that the members of our body should and can be offered for service to God as instruments of righteousness.

In Romans Chapter 7, Paul brings the law back into the discussion. Chapter 7 is a very important chapter. I believe that Paul knows that even after his most eloquent exposition in chapters 3-6, we, as human beings, would still be tempted to unconsciously try to obey the law in whatever natural strength we might have. We should know better, but as humans we tend to somehow at least think we feel more comfortable depending on ourselves than living by faith in Christ. Somehow it is easier to accept forgiveness of our sins by faith than to seek to live righteously by faith. I think this is why Paul included Chapter 7. He describes our ongoing experience with the law as a love triangle. “Do you not know, brothers and sisters—for I am speaking to those who know the law—that the law has authority over someone only as long as that person lives? For example, by law a married woman is bound to her husband as long as he is alive, but if her husband dies, she is released from the law that binds her to him. So then, if she has sexual relations with another man while her husband is still alive, she is called an adulteress. But if her husband dies, she is released from that law and is not an adulteress if she marries another man. So, my brothers and sisters, you also died to the law through the body of Christ, that you might belong to another, to him who was raised from the dead, in order that we might bear fruit for God. For when we were in the realm of the flesh, the sinful passions aroused by the law were at work in us, so that we bore fruit for death. But now, by dying to what once bound us, we have been released from the law so that we serve in the new way of the Spirit, and not in the old way of the written code” (Rom. 7:1-6 NIV).

In this passage, the married woman is you and me, the husband is the law, the other man is Christ. In a natural case such as this where the husband dies, the woman is free to marry the other man. However, in this case there is no way the husband, the law, is going to die. Jesus said that not the smallest point of the law would pass away until all is fulfilled. Let us remember that the expectations of the law are not bad. The husband’s expectations of his wife are not wrong, but she cannot meet them as hard as she might try. By the way, he won’t help her either. The interesting thing is the expectations of the other man are no less demanding. In fact they are higher. The difference is, and it is a huge one, the other man will meet the expectations for her. You can see why the

woman loves the other man so much. Why wouldn’t she? So, in this case the only way for the woman to be free is to die herself, which is exactly what she did when she was crucified with Christ. She was free from the demand to meet the requirements of the law herself. She could marry the man who would meet His demands for her and even through her. What a story!

Before we go on let’s take some time to review the attributes of a law. In nature there are laws that operate. When there is something in nature that happens every time the same way, we call it a law. For example on the earth when an object is dropped from some height, it always falls until something such as the ground, floor, table, etc. stops it. This happens because of the earth’s gravitational force. We call it the “law of gravity.” No matter where on earth we drop the object, it always falls. In the last half of Romans Chapter 7, Paul describes a law that is at work in his members. He testifies that he knows what is good, and he wants to do it. However, he finds a law at work in him that when he wants to do good, he ends up doing bad. He refers to it as the law of sin in his members. It is a law in him because it happens the same way every time. “We know that the law is spiritual; but I am unspiritual, sold as a slave to sin. I do not understand what I do. For what I want to do I do not do, but what I hate I do. And if I do what I do not want to do, I agree that the law is good. As it is, it is no longer I myself who do it, but it is sin living in me. For I know that good itself does not dwell in me, that is, in my sinful nature.[a] For I have the desire to do what is good, but I cannot carry it out. For I do not do the good I want to do, but the evil I do not want to do—this I keep on doing. Now if I do what I do not want to do, it is no longer I who do it, but it is sin living in me that does it. So I find this law at work: Although I want to do good, evil is right there with me. For in my inner being I delight in God’s law; but I see another law at work in me, waging war against the law of my mind and making me a prisoner of the law of sin at work within me. What a wretched man I am! Who will rescue me from this body that is subject to death” (Rom. 7:14-24 NIV)?

One more time Paul describes what it is like to try to obey the law in our own strength. It is like trying to build a fire under water. It will never happen! There is a “law” against it so to speak. In Romans Chapter 8, Paul reveals the answer to his and our dilemma; another law, the law of the Spirit of life. “Thanks be to God, who delivers me through Jesus Christ our Lord” (Rom. 7:25 NIV)! “Therefore, there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus, because through Christ Jesus the law of the Spirit who gives life has set you free from the law of sin and death. For what the law was powerless to do because



it was weakened by the flesh,[b] God did by sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh to be a sin offering. And so he condemned sin in the flesh, in order that the righteous requirement of the law might be fully met in us, who do not live according to the flesh but according to the Spirit” (Rom. 8:1-4 NIV).

Paul tells us in verse 2 of this passage that the “law of the Spirit of life” has set him free from the “law of sin and death.” One law has superseded another law. The law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has set us free from the law of sin and death. This happens as we walk according to the Spirit and not of the flesh. A law means that it happens this way every time if we are walking in the Spirit. Watchman Nee uses a natural example of one law superseding another law. If we fill a balloon with helium and release it, it goes up, not down. What about the law of gravity? It has been overcome and superseded by the law of buoyancy.

We come to the eighth chapter of Romans through being in Christ. Now through the indwelling presence of the Holy Spirit we have Christ in us. “I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me” (Gal. 2:20 KJV). What a wonderful summary statement of what we have discussed. Paul says he is crucified with Christ (therefore he is in Christ) nevertheless he lives (being in Christ he is risen with Christ) yet it is not him that is living in his flesh on a daily basis but Christ is living in him and through him (Christ is in him by the Holy Spirit). Notice that Paul does not say he is living by faith in the Son of God but rather by the faith of the Son of God. It was the faith of Christ being lived out through Paul’s body. Walking in the Spirit is really allowing Christ to live through us and in doing so to meet the requirements of the law.

You remember earlier we talked about imputed righteousness which is righteousness that is credited to us through our faith in Christ and what He accomplished on the cross for us. The righteousness spoken of in Romans Chapter 8 is an imparted righteousness. It is a righteousness that is lived out through us by the indwelling Christ. I like the way it is stated in Romans 8:4 NIV, “in order that the righteous requirement of the law might be fully met in us, who do not live according to the flesh but according to the Spirit.” This is a righteousness that meets the requirements of the law and more and is displayed through the fruit of the Spirit in our very lives. Aren’t God’s plan and provisions wonderful! “His divine power has given us everything we need for a godly life through our knowledge of him who called us by his own glory and goodness. Through these he has given us his very great and precious promises, so

that through them you may participate in the divine nature, having escaped the corruption in the world caused by evil desires” (2 Peter 1:3-4 NIV).

In Romans Chapters 9-11, Paul breaks his train of thought and talks about his sorrow and anguish for his natural heritage, the Jewish people. We will not go into that but will proceed directly to Romans Chapter 12. In Chapter 8, Paul leaves us with a key, which is walking according to the Spirit, but he does not say too much about how to do that. He does continue with instruction concerning that in Chapter 12. “With eyes wide open to the mercies of God, I beg you, my brothers, as an act of intelligent worship, to give him your bodies, as a living sacrifice, consecrated to him and acceptable by him. Don’t let the world around you squeeze you into its own mold, but let God remold your minds from within, so that you may prove in practice that the plan of God for you is good, meets all his demands and moves towards the goal of true maturity” (Rom 12:1-2 J.B. Phillips). Here is the key to walking by the Spirit; we must have our minds renewed. Let’s go back to the first chapter of Romans and see how Paul described the godless and wicked men. “For although they knew God, they neither glorified him as God nor gave thanks to him, but their thinking became futile and their foolish hearts were darkened. Although they claimed to be wise, they became fools and exchanged the glory of the immortal God for images made to look like a mortal human being and birds and animals and reptiles. Therefore God gave them over in the sinful desires of their hearts to sexual impurity for the degrading of their bodies with one another. They exchanged the truth about God for a lie, and worshiped and served created things rather than the Creator—who is forever praised. Amen. Because of this, God gave them over to shameful lusts. Even their women exchanged natural sexual relations for unnatural ones. In the same way the men also abandoned natural relations with women and were inflamed with lust for one another. Men committed shameful acts with other men, and received in themselves the due penalty for their error. Furthermore, just as they did not think it worthwhile to retain the knowledge of God, so God gave them over to a depraved mind, so that they do what ought not to be done” (Rom. 1:21-28 NIV). I have highlighted those phrases that refer to their way of thinking which involved their minds. Paul begins the Book of Romans talking about the importance of how we think, and he approaches the end of the book telling us that to walk in the Spirit we must have our way of thinking changed. “The mind governed by the flesh is death, but the mind governed by the Spirit is life and peace. The mind governed by the flesh is hostile to God; it does not submit to God’s law, nor can it do so” (Rom. 8:6-7 NIV).

In Romans 8:29 (NIV) Paul writes, “For those God foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the likeness of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brothers.” If we are to have the likeness of Christ, we surely must have his mind. In being led by the Holy Spirit, God will not bypass our minds. He may indeed reveal himself and his truth to us by way of intuition. We may know first in our hearts before we understand with our minds, but eventually our minds must come to the place of understanding. Paul wrote in Phil. 2:5-8 (KJV), “Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus: Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God: But made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men: And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.

When I was a young boy taking swimming lessons I came to the part of the class where we were being taught to dive into the water from the side of the pool. For most people entering the water head first is not natural. In my first attempts, as I pushed off from the side of the pool, I would, at the last second before entering the water, jerk my head up. As a result I would do a belly flop. The instructor told me that my body would follow my head. If I wanted to dive, I must keep my head down. If I did so my head would enter the water first and my body would naturally follow. He was right. The same is true spiritually. Proverbs 23:7a (KJV) says, “As he (a man) thinketh in his heart, so is he.” Our behaviors will usually be consistent with our thoughts. The Scripture has much to say about our way of thinking and the need for us to discipline our minds to think the thoughts of Christ. In his second letter to the Corinthian church, Paul writes, “For though we live in the world, we do not wage war as the world does. The weapons we fight with are not the weapons of the world. On the contrary, they have divine power to demolish strongholds. We demolish arguments and every pretension that sets itself up against the knowledge of God, and we take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ” (2 Cor. 10:3-5 NIV). I think it is impossible to have our minds renewed without immersing ourselves in God’s Word, the Holy Scriptures. “For the word of God is alive and active. Sharper than any double-edged sword, it penetrates even to dividing soul and spirit, joints and marrow; it judges the thoughts and attitudes of the heart. Nothing in all creation is hidden from God’s sight. Everything is uncovered and laid bare before the eyes of him to whom we must give account” (Heb. 4:12-13 NIV). God’s Word is absolute. It does not change. It is dependable. “Thus he shewed me: and, behold, the Lord stood upon a wall made by a plumbline, with a plumbline in his hand. And the Lord

said unto me, Amos, what seest thou? And I said, A plumbline. Then said the Lord, Behold, I will set a plumbline in the midst of my people Israel: I will not again pass by them any more” (Amos 7:7-8 KJV). We must square our thinking and thereby our lives with the plumbline of God’s Word.

Unfortunately, in the world today there are many voices that challenge the Word of God and those whose thinking is aligned with it. When we try to reason about things independent of the counsel of God’s Word and do so unrepentantly, we can become like the people Paul spoke of in the second chapter of Romans. God may give us over to a depraved mind. I can think of few things more frightening. Hear the words of God spoken through Jeremiah the prophet; “Is not my word like as a fire? saith the Lord; and like a hammer that breaketh the rock in pieces” (Jer. 23:29 KJV)? We must not play fast and loose with the Word of God. We must not make our own private interpretation of it but rather seek the enlightenment of the Holy Spirit and the counsel of godly people. “There is a way that seems right to a man, But its end is the way of death” (Prov. 14:12 NKJV). May we as people who are called by God’s name always answer this way, “Thus every one of you shall say to his neighbor, and every one to his brother, ‘What has the Lord answered?’ and, ‘What has the Lord spoken?’” (Jer. 23:35 NKJV)?

It is important to note that the goal stated in Romans 12:2 is “be ye transformed.” We do not do the transforming ourselves. It is the work of the Holy Spirit. However, we must remain in Christ (John 15:4), remain in his Word, faithfully gather with the Body of Christ in worship, fellowship with the Lord in prayer, pray in tongues, etc. These things are not law but rather behaviors that facilitate the renewal of our minds and ultimately result in our transformation into the image of Christ. When we do these things we are believing in faith that God will day by day impart to us his righteousness and holiness. “You were taught, with regard to your former way of life, to put off your old self, which is being corrupted by its deceitful desires; to be made new in the attitude of your minds; and to put on the new self, created to be like God in true righteousness and holiness” (Eph. 4:22-24 NIV). God by his grace has credited righteousness to our account

## IMPORTANT DATES

- Indiana Young Peoples..... Dec. 27-Dec. 31, 2014
- North Battleford Young Peoples ... Dec. 28-Jan. 1, 2015
- NC Winter Camp ..... Feb.13-15, 2015

through our faith in Christ and what he accomplished for us on the cross and his resurrection. However, God's ultimate desire is that he might impart his righteousness to us and that we might be conformed to the image of Christ and manifest the character of Christ in our daily walk. This is sonship. Romans 8:14 (KJV) states, "For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God." It often seems to me that the Shepherd is much more willing to lead us on the path than we, as sheep, are willing to follow. If we, as poor dumb sheep, really want to be led by the Shepherd, He will not fail to lead us. So often the problem is not that we do not know the leading of the Spirit, but rather our unwillingness to follow Him. I read the following in a book by Elisabeth Elliot, wife of missionary Jim Elliot, entitled "Keep A Quiet Heart" and I quote, "A young woman came in great perplexity to a Scottish preacher, asking how she could resolve the question of her own desires when they seemed to be in such contradiction to the will of God. He took out a slip of paper, wrote two words on it, handed it to her with the request that she sit down for ten minutes, ponder the words, cross out one of them, and bring the slip of

paper back to him. She sat down and read: No Lord. Which to cross out? It did not take her long to see that if she was saying No she could not say Lord, and if she wanted to call Him Lord, she could not say no."

Denying our own personal desires to obey Christ is not easy. That's why Romans 12:1 refers to "a living sacrifice." Webster's New Collegiate Dictionary defines sacrifice as, destruction or surrender of something for the sake of something else; give up, renounce, injure, or destroy for an ideal, belief, or end. For us the something else, ideal, belief, or end is sonship. However, we must remember we are not called to transform ourselves but rather to be transformed by the renewing of our minds. For this transformation to take place, we must remain in the flow of the Holy Spirit. As we immerse ourselves in God's Word and commune with Christ in prayer, we develop a confidence in the Shepherd such that we can surrender ourselves to Him without fear. Psalm 143:8 (KJV) states, "Cause me to hear thy loving-kindness in the morning; for in thee do I trust: cause me to know the way wherein I should walk; for I lift up my soul unto thee."

# Manners

## *By Andy Snoke*

"Your manners are as noticeable as the clothes you are wearing," said our local elder Brandon Snoke in the morning service. "Just as your clothing makes a statement about you, so do your manners." Brandon Snoke ministered on such a simple, and yet profound message on how we present ourselves to others simply by being mannerly.

It is true! It is amazing the connection you can make in someone's life simply by saying "thank you," "your welcome," and by presenting ourselves mannerly.

Bro Herrick Holt wrote long ago (Messages to the Church booklet) the following:

*As I write today it is as though I were writing my own boy. These are the things I have told him about I would like to tell it to all the **growing sons**. They are the things we must add to our life, or when our life is ended we will look like a tree naked of leaves.*

*Son, watch your manners. It seems such a small thing but around it your future is built. Poor manners mean poor growth. Manners are as essential as breathing. A boy without manners will be poor company in the time he is looking for his life partner. An ill-mannered boy is detrimental in any business,*

*and can hope for very little success. Manners are spiritual. Manners are important to God, so they must be important to you.*

*Son, watch your manners when it comes to taking the young lady out. See that you give the proper attention that God requires of you. Never follow the pattern of the world, but follow after God's order. Good manners in you will inspire dignity in her. A man who will allow the small things to pass by as though they are nothing will miss the more weighty matters.*

*Opening the door of the house or car for the lady is a must. Standing up and allowing the lady to be seated is orderly. Table manners with all the rest are as much a part of you as singing in the Spirit. If you don't know what you should do, then it is up to you to learn.*

*God, in His wisdom, mentions manners in 1 Cor. 13, where He says, "This love of which I speak is slow to lose patience- it looks for a way of being constructive. It is not possessive; it is neither anxious to impress nor does it cherish inflated ideas of its own importance. LOVE HAS GOOD MANNERS.*

*A man without manners will never know the depths*

*of real love. He will be shoddy, unfinished, a drawing roughed in, a song sung without polish, an instrument with broken strings.*

*Lamartine said, "Fine manners are a stronger bond than a beautiful face. The former binds, the latter attracts."*

*"Manners is one of the greatest engines of influence ever given to man," so said Mr. Whately.*

*"Better were it to be unborn than to be ill bred" (Sir Walter Raleigh).*

*Son, practice good manners until it is part of you: as you would take time out to pray, take time with your manners.*

*Manners in public or private, when exercised, will build you into a strong Godly man. This is well pleasing to God, the Church and your Father (Herrick Holt).*

I recently read the following from a secular magazine, and I think we can all agree with these statements:

*"They are easy to spot and hard to forget. This is the truth of all well-mannered individuals, be they man, woman, boy or girl. **The truth is that the mannerly person stands out in a crowd.** When you meet him or her you are immediately impressed by his or her **charming and magnetic personality.** The great news is that manners are taught and anyone can become well mannered if they sincerely seek to do so.*

*You may have noticed, whether at work, home or play, that the people who are well respected and whom others want to be around are generally mannerly, respectful and well socialized. This is because the mannerly person lives by what is commonly referred to as the 'Golden Rule' and they sincerely seek to do good unto others as much as possible" (R. Glover).*

As Brandon mentioned in our morning service, "your manners are as noticeable as the clothes you are wearing." Your manners, your clothing, your

language, your demeanor presents to others what is in your life. It is a solemn responsibility to be an Ambassador of Christ by our actions.

I would like to close with an old poem.

You are writing a book, a chapter each day,  
By the deeds that you do,  
and the words that you say,  
Men read what you write, distorted or true,  
What is the Gospel, according to you?

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