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# Whatever Happened to Right and Wrong?

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ONE BEAUTIFUL, SUNNY DAY you and I hike to a waterfall. To your astonishment, the water is flowing up from the pool to the top of the falls! “Do you see that?” you exclaim. “Yes,” I reply, “the law of gravity for water has been done away with. Now water can flow any way it wants.”

Of course, the laws of nature are still in effect. God made them and they have never been canceled. But in many churches today you can hear preaching that the greatest law of all, written with God’s own finger, has been done away with.

Could there be some connection between teaching that God’s law is no longer in effect, and our epidemic of crime, violence and immorality today?

## Thoughts to Remember:

- ♦ If God’s Ten Commandments have been done away with, what has taken its place? Today we see that people make moral decisions based merely on how they feel.
- ♦ **“He who trusts in his own heart is a fool”** (Proverbs 28:26). People want to make decisions without considering right and wrong; they don’t want restrictions. The Bible describes the problem: **“For they sowed the wind, and they shall reap the whirlwind”** (Hosea 8:7). We are reaping the whirlwind today in lawlessness and war.
- ♦ We have sowed the wind of glorified adultery in the media, and we’re reaping the whirlwind of teen pregnancies and divorce. We’ve sowed the wind of glorified violence, and we’re reaping the whirlwind of unprecedented violence by our youth.
- ♦ But the pendulum of permissiveness in society may soon swing back the other way. This lawlessness is leading some religious leaders to propose legislated morality. We should never forget the lessons of history: When church and state unite, the rights of the minority are trampled. Legislation is not the solution to sin.
- ♦ The answer is not a revolution in society; it is a revolution in your heart. What happens in the individual heart determines society. God’s Word describes the standard of righteousness: **“The works of his hands are verity and justice; all his commandments are sure. They stand fast forever and ever, and are done in truth and uprightness”** (Psalm 11:7, 8). **“The law of the Lord is**

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**perfect**" (Psalm 19:7). It is estimated that there have been 35 million laws to control human behavior, but God has set out just 10 perfect laws for us. Society has rejected God's law.

• God's law is the basis of the heavenly government. Some believe God had no law until the Ten Commandments at Sinai. But when Cain killed Abel, it was still sin. God had to write the Ten Commandments on stone because people had broken God's law written in their hearts.

• "...Sin is the transgression of the law" (1 John 3:4). Sin is rejecting God's authority, and people were able to choose whether they accepted or rejected God's authority since creation—not just since Sinai. "...Because Abraham obeyed my voice and kept my charge, my commandments, my statutes, and my laws" (Genesis 26:5). Abraham lived long before Sinai, but kept God's law.

• Some say God did away with the commandments in the New Testament. Yet Jesus, who is destroy the law or the prophets: I came not to destroy, but to fulfill. For assuredly, I say to you, till heaven and earth pass away, one jot or one tittle will by no means pass from the law till all is fulfilled" (Matthew 5:17, 18).

• Others say that the law was nailed to the cross when Jesus died and we're no longer under the law. Is it OK now to commit adultery? steal? take God's name in vain? To be consistent, we can't pick and choose which laws still apply. So what *did* happen to the law at the cross?

• "Having abolished in his flesh the enmity, that is, the law of commandments"—there it is! The law was abolished. But keep reading: "...contained in ordinances" (Ephesians 2:15). It is the ceremonies and ordinances that were abolished at the cross, not the Ten Commandments. The sacrificial system was done away with because Jesus, the sacrificial Lamb, had died.

• Sometimes people say, "God knows I love him." But their lives show no evidence of God's presence. "If you love me, keep my commandments" (John 14:15). "This is love for God: to obey his commands. And his commands are not burdensome" (1 John 5:3).

• So we're saved by our obedience? No, we're saved only by grace. Our obedience is evidence of our love for God—not our qualification to be saved. "For by grace you have been saved through faith, and not of yourselves; it is the gift of God" (Ephesians 2:8, 9).

• "But sin shall not have dominion over you, for you are not under the law, but under grace" (Romans 6:14). I'm not under the law? "What then? Shall we sin because we are not under the law but under grace? Certainly not!" (Romans 6:15). To be under the law is to be condemned to death, because I can't make up for all my sins. To be under grace means I come to Christ, who was condemned to death in my place and who made up for my sins. "Do we then make void the law through faith? Certainly not! On the contrary, we establish the law" (Romans 3:31).

## The "take-home" message for you . . .

• God can write His law in your heart. His love and compassion draws you to Him. His grace saves you; and His power in your life enables you to show the obedience that only love and gratitude can bring. What a Savior...What grace!

## Just between you . . . and God:

• Maybe you've been slipping and falling. The God who forgives invites you to obey; the God who invites you to obey gives you the power to obey and makes you a new person. How will you respond to that love? He wants your heart, and He wants to be your best Friend and Savior. Don't stray from the cross; let Him bring you near and work a miracle in your heart and your life.

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