

WHAT'S HAPPENING AT MBC:

1. Our next Communion Sunday will be on August 2nd. If you are interested in joining the church that Sunday, please get in contact with Pastor Spencer.
2. This Sunday we are having our Who We Are Class during the Sunday School hour. We will study the Nicene creed.
3. We are excited to announce the start of our new Men's Bible Study, Men of the Bible. The first gathering is going to start August 3rd, at 6:30 pm and will be held the first and third Monday of every month. We encourage all men to come out and join by signing up at the welcome table or reach out to Pastor Geoff.
4. To prepare for the preaching of the word on this coming Lord's Day, we would encourage you to meditate on the passage ahead of time. This Sunday's sermon will be from Daniel 2.

WHAT WE BELIEVE: *Of the Way of Salvation* - We believe that the salvation of sinners is wholly of grace, through the mediating offices of the Son of God. Jesus Christ, who by the appointment of the Father, freely took upon himself our nature, yet without sin, honored the divine law by his personal obedience, and by his death made a full atonement for our sins. We believe that He was raised from the dead and He is now enthroned in heaven, seated next to the Father, and, uniting in His wonderful person the tender sympathies with divine perfections, He is in every way qualified to be a suitable, compassionate, and an all-sufficient Savior. Eph. 2:5; Matt. 18:11; 1 John 4:10; 1 Cor. 3:5-7; Acts 15:11; John 3:16; 1:1-14; Heb. 4:14; 12:24; Phil. 2:6-7; Heb. 2:9, 14; 2 Cor. 5:21; Isa. 42:21; Phil. 2:8; Gal. 4:4-5; Rom. 3:21; Isa. 53:4-5; Matt. 20:28; Rom. 4:25; 3:21-26; 1 John 4:10; 2:2; 1 Cor. 15:1-3; Heb. 9:13-15; Heb. 1:8, 3; 8:1; Col. 3:1-4; Heb. 7:25; Col. 2:9; Heb. 2:18; 7:26; Psalms 89:19; Psalm 14.

WISDOM: "Antinomianism and legalism are not so much antithetical to each other as they are both antithetical to grace. This is why Scripture never prescribes one as the antidote for the other. Rather grace, God's grace in Christ in our union with Christ, is the antidote to both." – Sinclair Ferguson

WORD: "A Charge to Fight for Sound Doctrine", 1 Timothy 1:3-11

Suggested questions:

1. Read 1 Timothy 1:3-11. Was there anything that particularly challenged, impacted, or confused you from this Sunday's message?
2. What are some contemporary examples of "different doctrine" and "myths and endless genealogies"? How do they contrast with sound doctrine?
3. In what other passages of Scripture can you see the law being used lawfully?

DIGGING DEEPER: The 3.5 Uses of the Law in Romans 7
<https://thecripplegate.com/the-3-5-uses-of-the-law-in-romans-7/>

The 3.5 Uses of the Law in Romans 7

Dan Crabtree

In his *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, the French reformer and pastor John Calvin wrote that there are three “uses of the law” for today. Calvin wasn’t the first to articulate the enduring value of the Mosaic Law (Calvin himself quotes liberally from his spiritual forebears), but he has become the name most associated with the so-called Three Uses of the Law.

Though other reformers ordered these uses differently, Calvin’s three uses of the law can be listed as:

1. Exposing Sin in Everyone (*Institutes*, 2.7.6–9)
2. Restraining Sin in Non-Believers (*Institutes*, 2.7.10–11)
3. Teaching Obedience to Believers (*Institutes*, 2.7.12–13)

To put it another way: 1) The law shows you how sinful you are by showing you the righteous standard you can’t meet, ultimately driving you to Christ as your Savior. 2) Additionally, the law, when it’s known by unbelievers, causes them to fear judgment for breaking it externally, so they sin less, and society is more inhabitable. 3) But the “principal use” and “proper purpose” of the law, according to Calvin, is its instruction and exhortation to obey God’s will as revealed in the law, and effective only for those whom the Holy Spirit had made willing to obey God through the gospel.

The apostle Paul captured all three of these functions of the Mosaic Law in Romans 7. In the midst of his discussion on sanctification, Paul delineates all three uses of the law in this one chapter.

Paul also shows us that there is yet another use of the law (or, better, an extension of the third use of the law), and it is a critical function of the Old Testament in your life, believer. If Calvin were here writing this article (he’s got better things to do now), he’d give a hearty “Amen” to the last fraction of the use of the law. Christians need the law not only as a spotlight (Use 1), a bridle (Use 2), and a teacher (Use 3), but also as honey.

Let’s look to the text and see Paul’s 3.5 uses of the law in Romans 7.

The First Use of the Law in Romans 7

The law unmask us. We all assume we’re cleaner than we are, and so avoid a good Scriptural bath with the normal excuses. But when, through the law, we come into contact with actual cleanliness, true purity, and the moral perfection of God, we realize that we stink. And we need to.

That’s Paul’s argument in Romans 7:7. He writes, “What then shall we say? That the law is sin? By no means! Yet if it had not been for the law, I would not have known sin. For I would not have known what it is to covet if the law had not said, ‘You shall not covet.’”

Paul calls himself “alive apart from the law” (v. 9). In his own perception, without the holy standard of God to rain on his parade, Paul could get away with thinking he was a pretty stand-up guy. But then God exposed his heart of sin with the tenth commandment – don’t covet – and all that external religion started looking suspiciously like the cover-up it was.

He goes on to write in verse 13, “Did that which is good, then, bring death to me? By no means! It was sin, producing death in me through what is good, *in order that* sin might be shown to be sin, and through the commandment might become sinful beyond measure.” The phrase rendered “in order that” describes intentional purpose. So, was it the purpose of sin itself to be shown to be sin? No, sin wants to hide in a dark corner and remain unseen (John 3:19-20). Then, who purposed that sin would be shown to be sin through the law? Answer: God, who wrote it. God designed the law to rip off our masks and show us the ugly, sinful motives underneath.

The Second Use of the Law in Romans 7

Much of Paul’s argument here seems to contradict the second use of the law, saying that the law in fact makes sin worse, not better. Is the second use of the law actually in Romans 7?

Yes, but indirectly. He writes in verse 6, “But now we are released from the law, having died to that which held us captive, so that we serve in the new way of the Spirit and not in the old way of the written code.” The law did exercise a function in Paul’s life before the invasion of the Spirit – it made him serve, like a captive, in the way of the written code.

In other words, the law did produce some positive external conformity in Paul’s life before his heart was transformed to willingly obey. The threats of the law held him captive, made him work, and prevented him from living out all the wicked fantasies of his sin-sick heart.

Now, it is also true that at the same time, “sin seizing an opportunity through the commandment, produced in me all kinds of covetousness” (v. 8). Paul’s heart festered with worldliness while his hands acquiesced to religion. He was restrained and incited at the same time through the same law.

The Third Use of the Law in Romans 7

Paul goes on to praise the virtues of this law that had exposed and shackled him. He writes, “So the law is holy, and the commandment is holy and righteous and good” (v. 12). Despite his sinful proliferation leapfrogging over the law, Paul knows that God’s commands always carry the character of his nature. If God says to do it, then it’s good. It’s morally right. It is, in fact, holy like God is holy.

The inherent goodness of the law means that Paul can “agree with the law, that it is good” (v. 16). I’d argue that Paul agrees in Romans 7:16 because the Holy Spirit has so worked in his heart to cause him to agree with it, but that’s a longer debate for another time.

The point is, Christians agree with God's law that it is good. And not only in an external, perfunctory way.

Paul says, "So then, I myself serve the law of God with my mind, but with my flesh I serve the law of sin" (v. 25). Because of the power of Jesus Christ in his life, Paul is able to "serve in the new way of the Spirit," which means that he "serves the law of God with his mind." He no longer has mere external conformity to the law, but has some degree of true inner conformity to the law, embattled though it may be (v. 23). So, Paul sees the law as acting in a valuable way for the Christian to instruct genuine, heartfelt obedience to the God of the law.

The 3.5 Uses of the Law in Romans 7

What, then, is this half of a use this article is going on about? Look at verse 22, "For I delight in the law of God, in my inner being." One of the proper uses of the law – and a part of heartfelt obedience to the law – is to love it. To delight in it. To cherish it. To derive actual pleasure from the righteousness, holiness, and goodness of it. Obeying the law means enjoying the law.

Just look at the psalmists when they write about their affections for the law of God:

Psalm 119:97 "Oh how I love your law! It is my meditation all the day."

Psalm 19:7, 10 "The law of the LORD is perfect, reviving the soul . . . More to be desired are they than gold, even much fine gold; sweeter also than honey and drippings of the honeycomb."

Psalm 1:1-2 "Blessed is the man who walks not in the counsel of the wicked, nor stands in the way of sinners, nor sits in the seat of scoffers; but his delight is in the law of the LORD, and on his law he meditates day and night."

According to Paul, that's how he feels about God's law as well. By the power of the Spirit at work in his mind, he regards God's commands to him – some of which confront him, rebuke him, and demand change from him – are a source of such glorious wisdom that he loves them. He loves to meditate on them, to apply them, and to preach them. Paul delights in the law of God for all of its uses, and because of its source.

So did John Calvin. In reference to the law-delighting psalms, Calvin writes,

"These do not contradict Paul's statements, which show not what use the law serves for the regenerate, but what it can of itself confer upon man. But here the prophet proclaims the great usefulness of the law: the Lord instructs by their reading of it those whom he inwardly instills with a readiness to obey. He lays hold not only of the precepts, but the accompanying promise of grace, which alone sweetens what is bitter. For what would be less lovable than the law if, with importuning and threatening alone, it troubled souls through fear, and distressed them through fright? David especially shows that in the law he apprehended the Mediator, without whom there is no delight or sweetness."

To Calvin, the law is a delight not only because it teaches us how to live, but because it shows us God. And God is delightful.

So, the next time you go to open the Old Testament law, and you're reading through those long lists in Leviticus, or wondering about some of those odd prohibitions in Deuteronomy, remind yourself of the 3.5 uses of the Law. Remember that this good, holy command to Israel from heaven has been placed in your lap so that you might know the God who wrote it and enjoy him.

Psalm 119:103 "How sweet are your words to my taste, sweeter than honey to my mouth!"

1 Timothy 1:3-11

³ As I urged you when I was going to Macedonia, remain at Ephesus so that you may charge certain persons not to teach any different doctrine, ⁴ nor to devote themselves to myths and endless genealogies, which promote speculations rather than the stewardship from God that is by faith. ⁵ The aim of our charge is love that issues from a pure heart and a good conscience and a sincere faith. ⁶ Certain persons, by swerving from these, have wandered away into vain discussion, ⁷ desiring to be teachers of the law, without understanding either what they are saying or the things about which they make confident assertions.

⁸ Now we know that the law is good, if one uses it lawfully, ⁹ understanding this, that the law is not laid down for the just but for the lawless and disobedient, for the ungodly and sinners, for the unholy and profane, for those who strike their fathers and mothers, for murderers, ¹⁰ the sexually immoral, men who practice homosexuality, enslavers, liars, perjurers, and whatever else is contrary to sound doctrine, ¹¹ in accordance with the gospel of the glory of the blessed God with which I have been entrusted.