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Law and Love

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Law and Love

Day 22

Owe no one anything except to love one another, for he who loves another has fulfilled the law. For the commandments, "You shall not commit adultery," "You shall not murder," "You shall not steal," "You shall not bear false witness," "You shall not covet," and if there is any other commandment, are all summed up in this saying, namely, "You shall love your neighbor as yourself." Love does no harm to a neighbor; therefore love is the fulfillment of the law. (Romans 13:8-10)

Obedience to the Old Covenant law is not the basis of God's acceptance of us; and it is not the means by which we come to enjoy eternal life. Following rules and regulations, even those based on Scripture, will never get us back to God.

The Ten Commandments clearly spell out the good to do and the evil to avoid, but the law doesn't provide the ability to actually do what it says. The knowledge of good and evil (as clearly defined by the Old Covenant law) drives us to try and become like God by doing good and avoiding evil. But our independent soul, separated from God, simply cannot do the "good" it intends; religion doesn't work.

When God gave the Ten Commandments, He knew that in our fallen nature, obedience was impossible. But He gave the Old Covenant anyway ... so we could learn that fact for ourselves. He gave the law to show us our utter inability to obey the law ... so we would come to the end of ourselves ... give up on our independent soul-led living ... and find life in Jesus. "The law was our tutor to bring us to Christ" (Galatians 3:24).

Voices in our heads may tell us differently. Satan is a legalist; he will whisper condemning thoughts based on our failures to measure up to the standards we hold. He will tell us things like, "You lied again." "Shame on you." "You won't ever be good enough!"

Don't listen to these lies. God's lovingkindness is the basis of your acceptance. "There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus" (Romans 8:1). The love of the Father, Son, and Spirit is the firm, unshakable

foundation of your eternal life. It's not about your sins keeping you away; it's about God keeping you close. It's not about your exclusion and failure under the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil; it's about your inclusion in Jesus' victory.

God doesn't love you because you are good. He makes you good because He loves you.

As we come to know God's love, we become naturally obedient. When we know we are loved, we treat others with that same love. And, the one "who loves another has fulfilled the law." If we love someone, we won't commit adultery, murder, or steal. We will honor them, respect them and want what is best for them. Knowing we are loved makes us good so that we radiate His lovingkindness from the inside out.

Scripture doesn't say, "Love *abolishes* the law." Love doesn't do away with the law. It doesn't make stealing or adultery OK. Love isn't lawless. Rather, love verifies that the law is right. Love *fulfills* the law; it makes the commandments naturally doable for the soul at rest in God's love.

We live out the life God desires and promised for us, not by putting external rules on ourselves to stifle "bad" behaviors, but by truly becoming good from the inside out. Our soul isn't meant to try and live by obeying rules. It is meant to live by obeying the Spirit—by living in agreement with God who is love.

With our spirit alive with His Spirit, our soul abiding in Jesus' love and our body naturally expressing that, the law is fulfilled! "Love is the fulfillment of the law."

Ponder for a Moment

What thoughts and feelings arise in you as you consider the statement: "God doesn't love you because you are good. He makes you good because He loves you."

What thoughts and feelings arise in you as you consider the Scripture, "Love is the fulfillment of the law"?

In some way might you have been thinking God desires your obedience or holiness more than He desires you? Explain your answer.