

# **THE DECALOGUE AND THE CHRISTIAN**

**By**

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## **Introduction**

*For approximately the last 200 years there has been a movement within the ranks of evangelicalism to set aside the Ten Commandments, the reasoning being that Christians are not under law but under grace(Rom.6:14). To say that this statement from Paul has been misinterpreted and misapplied would, in truth, be an understatement of fact. Such thinking reflects a lack of clear understanding of both law and grace. The view that the law no longer has any pertinence for persons of faith in Christ has resulted in a false doctrine that may be referred to as Antinomianism [anti(against),nomas(law)], whereby the law and grace are seen as totally opposed to each other. This flawed thinking has resulted in the idea of the carnal man or carnal Christian. These ideas stem from a radical belief within a theological system know as Dispensationalism, which broke away from Reformed Theology after Protestantism came about.*

*Under this system, Christians have no obligation whatever to God's law, there is no demand for sanctification [which is defined and guided by the law], and there are not two, but three, classes of humans: the natural man, the carnal man, and the spiritual man. Proponents define these as follows: Natural man is not regenerated (unsaved); carnal man is regenerated (saved) but does not obediently seek holiness and is not pleasing to God; spiritual man is regenerated and is seeking to follow Christ in obedient faith (sanctification). However, the concept of a carnal Christian is not supported by Scripture.*

*Such a doctrinal belief eliminates any application for the Decalogue in the Christian life, and this constitutes a tragic error in judgment with deep and eternal spiritual consequences.*

### **Role of Decalogue in Repentance**

*The Bible states, in Gal.3:19, that the law was added because of transgressions. The law served as a tutor to bring us to Christ that we might be justified by faith (Gal.3:24). By this one understands that a major function of the Ten Commandments is to convict the heart of transgressions against the law [which means sin against God], thus urging the transgressor to turn from his sin to God (repentance). See Ezek.18:30. Paul said in Rom.7:7 “...I would not have known sin except through the law” ...**The definition of sin is lawlessness (I John 3:4)**. The Holy Spirit uses His law to convict the law breaker and to bring him to repentance. Ezek.18:31 tells us “cast away from you all the transgressions you have committed, and get yourselves a new heart and a new spirit, for why should you die...” Thus, one can see how the law facilitates the appropriation of God’s mercy and grace, leading to repentance, obedient faith, and salvation.*

### **The Law and the Pursuit of Holiness**

*At first, we observed the tendency of some to think that the law of God becomes obsolete when a person becomes a Christian. We need to realize, however, that the only aspect of the law that does not affect a Christian is its condemnation. “There is therefore no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus, who do not walk according to the flesh, but according to the Spirit.” (Rom.8:1). God’s law is eternally His standard for righteousness, and it will never pass away or become obsolete. Psa.119:10-11, “With my whole heart I have sought You: Oh, let me not wander from Your commandments! Your word have I hidden in my heart, that I might not sin against You.” Verse 55 “I*

remember Your name in the night, O Lord, and I keep Your law.” Verse 89 “Forever, O Lord, Your word is settled [established] in heaven.”

Paul, in 2 Cor.10:5-6, speaks of using spiritual weapons to defeat sin, “...bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ.” If we belong to Christ, then we love Him because He first loved us (1 John 4:19), and if we love Him, we keep His commandments (John 14:15), and this certainly includes the Decalogue (See Rom.13:8-10.). **So, our means of sanctification (holiness and righteousness in daily living) is to allow the Holy Spirit to apply His law in every aspect of our lives. I do not refer to legalism here, but to living” in the newness of the Spirit and not [in] the oldness of the letter” (Rom.7:6).**

As a Christian, my righteousness regarding my justification before the Father is the imputed righteousness of Christ, but my righteousness in my daily conduct here on earth comes from obedience to God’s law. This is precisely the reason that Jesus emphasized repeatedly that His followers keep His commandments. See John 14:15, 21-24, 15:10, 12, 14, 17, 1 John 5:3. A person who professes to follow Christ must not hide behind his justification due to the righteousness of Christ and try to avoid obedience to God’s law [which is for his own good and the good of others (Deut.6:25)]. Entertaining antinomian thoughts and cultivating such an evil practice is the height of spiritual folly and will ultimately lead to spiritual bankruptcy and eternal death. **Read and study Rom.6:16 & 22, 8:13-14, Gal.6:7-8. Also study Gal.5:19-21 and realize that those who practice sin will not be in heaven for eternity. Jesus’ words in Matt.7:21-23 give fair warning against carnality, and Heb.12:14 clearly states that without holiness no one will see the Lord.**

## **The Essential Elements of Faith**

*There are three major aspects of faith. Briefly stated, these are **belief**, **love** and **obedience** (See John 14:15, 21-24, and 15:10). All of these are equally and vitally important to one who would follow and honor God through Christ. Love and obedience cannot be mutually exclusive with regard to voluntary application. Neither of these elements can legitimately exist without the other. One must actually love God and trust in His grace in order to keep His commandments, and one must be obedient in order to claim a living faith in Christ. Thus, it is essential for a person to surrender his own will to God's will, turning from sin to God (repentance) before real faith can enter his heart. **God does not regenerate a heart that remains committed to a life of sin.** Therefore, repentance and salvation cannot be separated. Likewise, one cannot be justified before God without being set aside for a life of holiness according to God's purposes in granting him a new life in Christ. One who walks according to the sinful flesh will die, but he who lives by the Spirit will have life everlasting. God's law leads to holiness and honors God's matchless grace by which we are saved. And as the Lord has said, "Wisdom is justified by all her children (Luke 7:35).*

*God's certain purposes in our salvation are to show us mercy instead of demanding justice [our eternal death for our sins] (Titus 3:4-7) and to conform us to Christ by our sanctification through the fulfillment of the righteous requirements of law in us (Rom.8:4, II Cor. 5:21). The grace of God does not lower God's perfectly righteous standard, but rather enables us by His Spirit of Grace and our obedience of faith to grow up spiritually into a blameless and spotless bride for Christ (See Titus 2:14, Eph.5:26-27).*

*God knows that we will not attain to sinless perfection according to the letter of the law, and that is not His purpose in the law. More importantly, He knows that we can fulfill His intent for the*

law through loving Him with all our heart, soul and mind, and by loving our neighbor as our self. The Lord Jesus essentially said that is being perfect (See Matt.22:37-40). Paul said that we should obey the law in the newness of the Spirit and not struggle with the oldness of the letter (Rom.7:6).

One should now be able to see that the law is vitally essential to every person of faith in God through Christ, and one should now understand Rom.2:13 “For not the hearers of the law are just in the sight of God, but the doers of the law will be justified.” **One can ‘do’ the law only by faith.**