

Here we arrive to a major point that can change your relationship with God in a significant way if you understand this concept properly. The reason why God gave the Law was to bring your conscience back to a proper place, to the way that God intended it to function; back to the standard of God. The Law was an attempt to "reset" and recalibrate the conscience. This was the purpose of the Law, namely The Ten Commandments. However, religion has missed the point and has propagated the idea that the reason God said "you shall not do this and that," was because He wanted you to fulfill and obey all these commands, in order for you to be right with Him. But nobody can keep the Law. *Nobody has ever kept the Law.* That might be a radical statement to many people. Some of you may still think that God gave the Law to people so that they would keep it. It's not true. You can never keep the Law. The Law was not given for you to keep. The Law was given to show you God's standard of morality and perfection. If you yield to it, instantly it will cause your conscience to start functioning right, it would calibrate and tune your "internal moral monitoring system."



Imagine yourself for a moment as standing in quicksand and sinking and having everybody else around you in the same quicksand. If everybody is sinking at the same rate, most of those people will not notice it and the sinking rate will be relative, because everybody compares themselves with the others. However, if you have a pillar on solid ground with markers on it, even though everybody is sinking at the same rate, you can look at that pole and realize: "I am sinking, this is getting serious." In this case, you have a fixed and immovable reference point. In the same way, the Law with the Ten Commandments was God's immovable standard of right and wrong, and the reason God gave it was to re-activate your conscience and bring you back to where you would not have a dull, evil, and defiled conscience anymore, or a conscience that has been skewed by comparing yourself with other people.

The Law was given to show you right and wrong, and to condemn you. The Law was not given to set you free, but to condemn you.

2 Corinthians 3:7-9 (NKJV)

⁷ But if *the ministry of death*, written and engraved on stones, was glorious, so that the children of Israel could not look steadily at the face of Moses because of the glory of his countenance, which glory was passing away,

⁸ how will *the ministry of the Spirit* not be more glorious?

⁹ For if *the ministry of condemnation* had glory, *the ministry of righteousness* exceeds much more in glory.

The Ten Commandments were the only ones written and engraved in stones as this is mentioned in verse 7. Those Ten Commandments are called the ministry of death in verse 7 and the ministry of condemnation in verse 9. In the New Testament, Jesus came to give us life and Satan came to give us death:

John 10:10 (NKJV)

¹⁰ The thief does not come except *to steal, and to kill, and to destroy*. I have come that *they may have life*, and that they may have it more abundantly.

In the New Testament, Jesus made you free of condemnation, but the devil and your conscience continue to condemn you. The conscience is like a robot that knows only good and evil. The conscience knows only when you sinned, but it doesn't know about the higher wisdom and righteousness of God in Christ that have already removed those sins that the conscience is condemning you with:

Romans 8:1 (NKJV)

¹ There is therefore now *no condemnation* to those who are in Christ Jesus, who do not walk according to the flesh, but according to the Spirit.

Jesus, Who fulfilled all the Law, and Whose life was in complete unison with the Law, is not condemning you when you sin; yet the Law condemns you and it has always been a ministry of condemnation. Jesus is not the One condemning you when you sin, but your conscience fueled by the Law.

1 Corinthians 15:56 (NKJV)

⁵⁶ The sting of death is sin, and *the strength of sin is the Law*.

This passage tells us that sin produces death and that the strength of sin is the Law. Before I talk about sin and the Law, I would like to explain a little about what does sting of death mean. I personally didn't understand this expression for years and I am sure that there are other Christians in the same situation. How does death sting people, including believers, through sin and what does that mean practically? When people sin, death itself stings them. It is similar to a scorpion sting or to an injection with a venom dose into their being. Once the sting happens, death begins to affect their personality, mind, thoughts, feelings, moods, and their physical body without them even realizing it, because death's effects might not manifest immediately. How does death manifest in their lives? They will not lose their salvation if they are true believers, but death will affect the quality of their life here on earth. Sin brings condemnation and guilt that paralyze believers' ability to serve God and people with full joy and peace, because their conscience is tainted by sin. They might begin to feel confused, depressed, discouraged, overwhelmed, or hopeless with no reason, and they will wonder why those things happened to them. Also, they will lose their peace, joy, and become weak in faith when it comes to facing various life situations. One reason for that is that death infiltrated their being through their sinful deeds and it began to affect them negatively. Similarly, the physical body is slowly affected by death. Those believers might experience certain sicknesses all of a sudden, age faster, and even die prematurely. When Adam and Eve sinned, they were stung by death, and from that moment onward, death started to work in them. Although not all the effects of death were seen immediately, slowly every part of their being was affected by it, until they finally died even physically. *The rate of your sinning accelerates or slows down the manifestations of death in your life*. That is one reason why we, as believers in Christ, are interested in walking in holiness, so that we would live longer, healthier, happier, and richer lives and fulfill the calling and the destiny that God has planned for us.

Now, let's come back to the second part of the verse that we read earlier, where it talked about sin and the Law. The Law didn't strengthen you in your battle against sin; it rather strengthened sin in its battle against you. How? Well, on one hand the Law raised the standard of right and wrong, and increased the sensitivity of your conscience. On the other hand, because of your spirit's sinful nature inherited from Adam, when your dead spirit came in contact with a perfect and holy Law, it caused you to fail every time. As a result, it created in you the consciousness of a failing sinner in need of God. *That is how the Law strengthened sin: it gave you both the conscience back, as well as a sinner-consciousness*. Consciousness is a little different from conscience. Consciousness is a mindset, a way of thinking, or a framework of

all the things that you are aware of in the present time. Consciousness answers the questions, "What do you know? What are you aware of that influences your life's decisions?" while conscience answers the question, "What is right and what is wrong?." This process of how sin was strengthened against you is explained in Romans 7:5 this way:

Romans 7:5 (NKJV)

⁵ For when we were in the flesh, *the sinful passions which were aroused by the Law* were at work in our members to bear fruit to death.

In other words, the Law revealed the sin and the principle of evil that was already present in people, like a chemical reaction. Most Christians believe that God gave the Law to help us. True, it did help us when, as a human race, we had skewed our conscience, by comparing ourselves with other people and lowering our moral standards to a degraded state. In those instances, when God said "You shall not ...," your conscience was brought back to where it should have been, and you became aware that you were a sinner to the core. That was a good thing that God intended through the Law. However, the downside of the Law was that it also condemned you, killed you, caused you shame, and fear, the same way it happened with Adam and Eve when they got the conscience in the first place, resulting in all these negative effects. Therefore, on one hand, it was necessary for God to give the Law for the sake of the conscience, but on the other hand, through the Law, your conscience began condemning you and it continues to condemn you today.

The conscience never tells you anything encouraging, neither praises you for something that you did well. If you did ninety-nine things right and only one thing wrong, your conscience will only show you the one thing that you did wrong. It will never tell you: "You are doing well; you are doing better; you are getting closer." The conscience is there to condemn you and show you what is wrong. The conscience has all these negative effects, but in the New Covenant we have something better than the conscience and a better way of dealing with morality, although the conscience is something that we still need today.

At this point, you might argue: "If everything you are saying is true and we are living in the New Testament, maybe we should remove the Ten Commandments from the courts and from all the public places, because now we have a greater law, something better." Not really, because not everybody is a born-again believer in Christ. Not everybody has the Holy Spirit and is following the Him, including believers. But especially for people that don't know God, their conscience is the only restraint that they have against total ungodliness.

1 Timothy 1:8-9 (NKJV)

⁸ But we know that the Law is good if one uses it lawfully,

⁹ knowing this: that *the Law is not made for a righteous person*, but for the lawless and insubordinate, for the ungodly and for sinners, for the unholy and profane, for murderers of fathers and murderers of mothers, for manslayers.

The Law is good if it's used properly and in the right context. We need the Law; we need to have this perfect standard of morality, but as for us Christians, we can cleanse our conscience and we can move beyond it to even a greater way of relating to God and people. Who is a righteous person? The born-again Christian. At the moment of salvation, Christians become the righteousness of God in Christ (2 Corinthians 5:21). People that are not born again in Christ, they need to know the standard of right and wrong, what is godly and what is ungodly. In the New Testament, God didn't change the standard; He just fulfilled it through Jesus, and has made us clean not based on our adherence to the Law, but based on the shed blood of Christ and based on our faith in Him. The Law was not given to make us right with God, but to amplify our conscience and to point to us good and evil, which can only strengthen sin and condemn us further.

Romans 3:19-20 (NKJV)

¹⁹ Now we know that whatever the Law says, it says to those who are under the Law, that *every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty* before God.

²⁰ Therefore by the deeds of the Law no flesh will be justified in His sight, for by the Law is *the knowledge of sin*.

Verse 19 describes the purpose of the Law, that the Law was given to stop all excuses of men, and that the whole world may become guilty before God. Today people would say: "Oh yeah, I have done some wrongs, but I was raised in an abusive family, and I was taken advantage of when I was a child." Therefore, we blame it on anybody and anything else. However, the Law does not give any allowances for why you did what you did. If you broke the standard, you are guilty. The Law does not have any mercy in it; it stopped all your excuses and made you guilty before God. The Law gave you both the knowledge of sin and the awareness of sin in your life. *The Law gave you a sin-consciousness*. This means that the Law made you aware continuously of your sinful nature.

However, in the New Testament we have something better than the conscience. We, as believers, are not supposed to relate to God based on a list of DOs and DON'Ts and based on whether we measure up to those rules or not. If we allow the Law and the conscience to condemn us, we will continue to be entrapped in a vicious cycle of sinning. Yes, it's true that the nature of our spirit, the core of our being, is no longer sinful. We no longer have that predisposition towards evil in us anymore at the level of our spirit and because of that, when we come in contact with the Law, it should not strengthen sin in us any longer as it did in the past, right? But, between the Law and our new reborn spirit is the soul with a mind, that has been programmed according to the sinful spirit we had before. Our habits, beliefs, and emotions have been ingrained with a consciousness of sin and because of that, when the soul comes in contact with the Law, it still makes us sin, until we manage to renew our minds with an awareness of righteousness, with an awareness of our changed nature. Moreover, we as Christians still live in a fallen world and still have a conscience that constantly has a natural tendency towards sin-consciousness and towards living under the Law. However, the truth is that now our new spirit is completely aligned and in unity with the Law. There is no conflict between them anymore. Only the mind is the one that needs to catch up and align itself with what has happened inside of us.

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