



Should a Believer Obey the Ten Commandments?

“Sin is no longer your master, for you are no longer subject to the law, which enslaves you to sin. Instead, you are free by God’s grace.” (Romans 6:14, NLT)

The law is that system of legislation God gave through Moses to the nation of Israel. There is the ceremonial, civil and moral law. It is referred to in the New Testament as the Old Covenant or agreement. In previous devotionals, you have been studying the Ten Commandments, the moral law. The question for a believer is, “Are you still under the old law system and should you obey the Ten Commandments?” The verse above will give you a clue! However, examine some facts.

The Israelites and the law

As God gave the law to Israel through Moses, he designed the law to reveal his character, show his people their sinfulness and lead them to God. Keeping the law would bring blessings, but it would not save them. No one has ever been made right with God by keeping the law, only by faith! God makes you right with himself by a personal faith in Jesus Christ. He does it all – even gives you the faith to believe! (Ephesians 2:8-9, NIV)

When Moses came down from Mt. Sinai and read the law to the people, they eagerly responded, *“We will do everything the Lord has said; we will obey.”* (Exodus 24:7b, NIV) They had such good intentions! Even though the law was good and the commandments convicted them of sin, it **gave them no power to obey!** They tried so hard to obey but the power of sin in them was greater. When have you experienced that? They failed miserably, even worshipping idols! God disciplined them severely by allowing other nations to capture them and take them away. What a sad time! However, Israel demonstrated forever that no one in the human race (by his/her own strength) could keep a list of rules. It takes “Jesus-power!” Remember that lesson!

Now attached to the law was a curse – the death penalty! The Bible says, *“Cursed is everyone who does not observe and obey all these commands that are written in God’s book of the Law.”* (Galatians 3:10, NLT) James says, *“You break one law, you’re guilty of all.”* (James 2:10) Who could free people from this curse of the law? Only Jesus!

Jesus and the law

Because Jesus was Jewish, he was born under the law system. He didn’t come to destroy the law but to fulfill it. He fulfilled the requirements of the law by obeying every one of them perfectly. He never sinned once! Did you ever think of Jesus’ brothers and sisters? They lived with a perfect brother! Amazing! However, Jesus did much more than fulfill the law.

On the cross, he took the death penalty his Father demanded. He became the Substitute for all guilty lawbreakers, including you! Have you thanked him today?

Jesus and grace

When God sent Jesus to the earth, he came full of **grace** and **truth**. The Bible says, “*For the law was given through Moses, grace and truth came from Jesus Christ.*” (John 1:17, NIV) When Jesus spoke, he spoke truth, but what does grace mean? Grace is the unearned, undeserved favor and goodness of God poured out on those who believe. It has been explained this way: **God’s Riches At Christ’s Expense**. Every blessing you receive from God is because of his grace! His unconditional love for you, his forgiveness, salvation and the gift of the Holy Spirit came from a heart of grace – amazing grace! This truth sets you free from your old “do-it-yourself” life-style.

Believers and the law

Jesus’ work on the cross set you free from the law. You now live under the law of Christ, which is love. Should you still obey the Ten Commandments? God’s standards of right and wrong have not changed. It is still wrong to steal, murder, etc. In addition, God repeats nine of the Ten Commandments in the New Testament but with a big distinction. They are not given as law with a penalty attached, but as a guide to living to please God. (2 Timothy 3:16b) The only commandment not repeated is the Sabbath Law, as believers worship on Sunday, the day of resurrection. Jesus, in the Sermon on the Mount, sets an even higher standard. The law says, “Do not murder.” Jesus says, “Do not even hate.”

As a believer, how should you obey the commandments? It is a completely new ball game! You no longer obey because of fear of punishment. Instead, when you think of what Jesus has done for you, you obey because you love him. You no longer depend on your own ability to do what is right, but you trust and depend on the power of the Holy Spirit. What a difference! The Apostle Paul said, “*For I can do everything with the help of Christ who gives me the strength I need.*” (Philippians 4:13, NLT) So can you!

Attitude check:

- How has your attitude changed toward obedience to Jesus?

Explore:

- Read, “Live to Please God” (Romans 8:5-8) and “Why Christians Need the Holy Spirit.” (Galatians 5:16-26)
- Write in your journal one way God wants you to change by the power of the Holy Spirit.

Talking with God:

- Father, thank you for your wonderful grace and power to live a life to please you.