

Basic Training 9.3

Did Jesus Cancel Out the Moral Law?

Gal 5:24-25

24 And they that are Christ's have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts.

25 If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit.

1. Introduction
1. Tonight is partly a review of the last couple of weeks where we dealt with morality and mercy, and part of this will add some new material.
2. Any time someone teaches the Bible with an emphasis on living a moral life, there are some who quickly call that legalism.
3. Legalism is roughly defined as **salvation by works** that puts a great emphasis on trusting in a person's good works and their abstaining from doing sinful things.

4. Legalism puts less of an emphasis on the importance of Jesus' work of salvation.
 5. But that is nowhere close to what we are saying by emphasizing high moral standards.
 6. Tonight's lesson will look at how trusting in Jesus does not mean we ignore God's moral standards.
- II. Review of holiness and mercy
- A. God has high moral standards for us
 1. Last week our subject was: Godliness: Morality and Mercy.
 2. We looked at the combination two of God's characteristics that, to us, sometimes seem to be in conflict with each other: **[slide1] (1) God is holy, and (2) God is merciful.**
 3. In the past two weeks we looked at several of God's very high standards of morality that rise out of His holiness.
 4. We considered some of those high morals identified is some of the 10 commandments

that Jesus repeated in the gospels, and also in the letters of some of the apostles.

5. We saw how **[slide1] God is holy and has high moral standards** and also expects us to follow them. For He said:

6. **“Ye shall be holy: for I the LORD your God am holy”**. (Lev 19:2, and quoted in 1 Pet 1:16)

7. And Jesus added this tough one: **“Be ye therefore perfect as your Father which is in heaven is perfect.”** (Matt 5:48)

B. Jesus hung out with sinners

1. Yet after considering God’s high moral standards and God’s expectations that we would follow them, we looked at several examples of people **[slide2] Jesus chose to hang out with people of questionable standards.**

2. He even accepted an accusation of the religious leaders when they said **He was a**

“friend of publicans and sinners.” (Matt 11:19)

3. Some of those sinners included **Zacchaeus and Matthew**, two tax collectors whom he went home and dined with.
4. And after eating with Matthew, He answered those who criticized Him for associating with such a sinner as Matthew by saying:
*Mark 2:17 They that are whole have no need of the physician, but **they that are sick: I came not to call the righteous but sinners to repentance.***
5. **Jesus also indirectly defended an adulterous woman** against a crowd of her accusers who were ready to stone her.
6. However, in each of these cases, **[slide3] Jesus was pursuing His mission to “seek and save the lost.” (Luke 19:10)**
- c. Jesus did not compromise, He transformed and forgave

1. But another important discovery we made in each of these cases, was that He did not compromise the high moral standards of the law in dealing with these immoral people.
2. For He saw these immoral people as sinners who needed to be saved. And in His interactions with them and many others like them, sinners were transformed after being in the presence of Jesus.
3. Jesus was holy, Jesus was the Word made flesh, and as such, Jesus was the Author of the commandments, and Jesus was sinless.
4. **So [slide3] when Jesus was in the presence of sinners, that combination of Jesus' holiness and His loving mercy, changed their hearts, and pulled them away from their sin to repentance and forgiveness.**
5. That is why Jesus told the adulterous woman:[slide3] **“Neither do I condemn thee: go, and sin no more.” (John 8:11)**

6. Holiness and mercy may appear to be as opposites, but at the place they meet, sinners are converted, cleansed, and set free.
7. We are going to see in a moment that it was the finger of God that wrote the commandments, but the other thing the finger of God is known for is casting out devils. (Luke 11:20)
8. God writes the rules, and then casts out the chief rule breaker with the same finger!

D. Example of the Ark

1. We also studied the Ark of the Covenant as an example of the meeting of holiness and mercy.
2. That gold-plated box, the Ark, contained the very tablets of stone that God had carved His commandments on with His finger:
Ex 31:18 And he gave unto Moses, when he had made an end of communing with him upon mount Sinai, two tables of testimony,

tables of stone, written with the finger of God.

3. So the contents in that box represented God's holiness and His high moral standards.
 4. But the lid of the Ark was called the "Mercy Seat" that had two cherubim (winged angelic creatures) on top.
 5. We noted that the place where God met man and communicated with man was from there between the cherubim on top of the mercy seat.
 6. **[slide4] So one could not even touch the commandments unless they first touched mercy!**
- E. Loving God and the power of the new covenant
1. But the ironic thing about that connecting point between God's strict moral standards and His life-changing mercy, is that is also where love comes into the picture.

2. **[slide5] When we realize how crazy in love God is with us, it makes us want to change to begin to love the things He loves.**
 3. That is why Jesus said, **[slide5] “If ye love me, keep my commandments.” (John 14:15)**
 4. Jesus didn't do away with the commandments. Now by the power of the new covenant which offers forgiveness by Jesus' blood and receiving the Holy Ghost within us, God writes His commandments inside our hearts.
 5. So that is why we can introduce God's moral standards in a teaching about godly living, because there are certainly relevant to us today, and God is still holy and calls us to be holy.
- III. Ye have heard, but I have said
- A. Temporary aspects of the law
 1. It is one thing to say that Jesus' sacrifice on the cross fulfilled the law, but some people

incorrectly assume that means that Jesus eliminated all of the law.

2. If that were so, that would mean the aspects of the law that require moral conduct would also be eliminated.
3. So did Jesus come to destroy the law and eliminate it entirely?

Matt 5:16-17

16 Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven.

17 Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil.

4. That part of the law that addresses God's moral standards is not an evil thing to be done away with, for as Jesus said, it leads to men seeing your light of "good works" that brings glory to God.
- B. A high and lasting view of the law

1. Think about how Jesus used His authority as the Author of the Law to challenge His audience to an even higher standard of morality than the law required.
 2. Let's consider Matthew 5 where He addressed six moral requirements they were familiar with from the law, and then introduced a deeper understanding of why they are still important.
 3. Jesus introduced them with: "ye have heard," or "it hath been said," and then He followed what they were familiar with His teaching: "but I say unto you."
- c. Murder—the 6th commandment (Ex 20:13)
1. The first dealt with murder:
Matt 5:21 Ye have heard that it was said by them of old time, Thou shalt not kill; and whosoever shall kill shall be in danger of the judgment:

2. In the following verses, Jesus then identified a common cause behind murder, which is an unjust expression of **anger**.
 3. Did Jesus do away with thou shalt not kill? No. It is a moral law.
 4. He just went deeper to show that anger was at the root of murder and therefore instructed us not to call people names, like worthless or fool, but taught that people **must** reconcile their differences quickly.
- D. Adultery—the 7th commandment (Ex 20:14)
1. Next, Jesus dealt with murder:
Matt 5:27 Ye have heard that it was said by them of old time, Thou shalt not commit adultery:
 2. Again, Jesus identified a root cause of adultery: lust of the eyes that progresses into lust in the heart before the physical act of adultery ever happens.
 3. Did Jesus do away with “thou shalt not commit adultery?” No. It is a moral law.

4. He just revealed the deeper cause of the act of adultery, looking with lust. Then admonished: “Cut it out!”, referring to getting rid of anything leads a person to lust.
- E. Divorce for any reason (Deut 24:1)
 1. The third thing He dealt with was related to adultery, that being laws regarding divorce (Deut 24:1):

Matt 5:31 It hath been said, Whosoever shall put away his wife, let him give her a writing of divorcement:
 2. In Jesus’ day, their culture had become very permissive about divorce and lowered the standard to this: if you don’t like her, divorce her.
 3. Did Jesus side with the compromisers of morality in His day? No.
 4. Jesus revealed the reason divorce was permitted at all, to protect the person whose spouse had broken the 7th

- commandment and committed adultery, thereby violating their marriage covenant.
5. Divorce was not to be used as a convenient tool for trading in your old model for a new one. Jesus upheld the moral law.
 - F. Swearing—the 3rd commandment (Ex 20:7, Lev 19:12)
 1. The fourth point Jesus made dealt with the 3rd commandment regarding taking the Lord's name in vain:
Matt 5:33 Again, ye have heard that it hath been said by them of old time, Thou shalt not forswear thyself, but shalt perform unto the Lord thine oaths:
 2. We have often taught that the 3rd commandment is a prohibition against profanity that interlaces “God” or “Jesus.”
 3. While that is an appropriate application in our day, in the time of Moses and Jesus, people saw that commandment as using

God's name to swear to an oath or a promise you wanted someone to believe.

4. In our day, we might say, "I swear to God" after making a statement you wanted a person to believe.
 5. Jesus said, "Don't do that." Just speak the truth all the time so people won't doubt your word.
 6. Did Jesus compromise a moral law? No. He established the importance of having a moral mouth.
- G. Revenge (Exodus 21:24, Lev 24:20)
1. Jesus' fifth point dealt with revenge:
Matt 5:38 Ye have heard that it hath been said, An eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth:
 2. This one is kind of similar to his discussion about divorce. People were taking something intended to uphold a moral standard and perverted its meaning so they could justify their sin.

3. The same is true here. This law was to protect a standard of justice that required that a guilty person would have to take responsibility for their crime and pay the appropriate restitution.
 4. Instead, people were using it as a reason to take revenge.
 5. Again, Jesus did not side with moral compromisers and perverters of justice. Instead He elevated the moral standard by saying we should turn the other cheek, give the guy your cloke also, go the extra mile.
- H. Love your friends and hate your enemies?
(Lev 19:18)
1. The last point Jesus made about the Law was similar to the last.
Matt 5:43 Ye have heard that it hath been said, Thou shalt love thy neighbour, and hate thine enemy.
 2. First, that is not a quote of any law. The commandment in Leviticus 19:18 instructed

us in that first statement, to love our neighbor as ourself.

3. Perhaps someone had sarcastically added that tag-on as a contrast to the statement in the law, but it had become a common saying in Jesus' day.
4. Did Jesus side with the moral compromisers of His day?
5. No. Once again, He took the requirement of the law a step further by saying:
Matt 5:44 But I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you;

IV. Conclusion

1. Jesus did not eliminate the moral law. He affirmed it. And even went further to address not only the prohibited behaviors that the law described, but went a step

deeper to examine the heart that needed to be healed.

2. That was a common thread throughout the New Testament, beginning with Jesus, and then continuing with the apostles who wrote letters affirming the high moral standards of the law still applied to our walk in holiness, also called, walking in the Spirit.

Gal 5:16-18

16 This I say then, Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh.

17 For the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh: and these are contrary the one to the other: so that ye cannot do the things that ye would.

18 But if ye be led of the Spirit, ye are not under the law.

3. That is because Holy Ghost filled people will show the fruit of the Spirit and not the works of the flesh which he repeated in the next several verses.

4. The moral law shows up in the New Testament over and over. That is one of the purposes of the letters in the New Testament, to teach new believers of Jesus how to live a moral life in obedience to Jesus.
5. So rather than seeking to please God by obeying a list of rules, we are demonstrating our love for God by prioritizing what God prioritizes by walking in the Spirit, not the flesh:

Gal 5:24-25

24 And they that are Christ's have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts.

25 If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit.