

THE PROPER USE OF THE LAW **(1 Timothy 1:8-11)**

I. It is to bring conviction of sin.

- A. We aren't sure exactly what these false teachers were saying.
 - 1. They were probably teaching observance of facets of Mosaic Law as the means of salvation.
 - 2. At the same time, they were living in a sinful manner.
 - 3. You might think this sounds contradictory but its true.
- B. Most people think legalism and licentiousness are opposites and grace is the balance between the two.
 - 1. However, the two go hand in hand.
 - 2. Legalism, the carrying out of laws and the pride that comes from following law is fleshly.
 - 3. Since this person operates in the physical all the time, he will eventually give in to the flesh.
 - 4. Sin is not being dealt with inwardly, just rule keeping, therefore, he has no idea how to deal with lustful desires.
- C. This person does not understand the power of God's word to work on the inward man by renewing him from the inside out.
- D. The law convicts me of sin and tells me of my need for a Savior and the change of heart that comes about by coming to that Savior in His way.

II. The improper use of God's law.

- A. The specifics of this are not mentioned here, but this was the entire thrust of Paul's earlier life before conversion.
 - 1. He was zealous for the Law (Philippians 3:4-6) and felt that keeping the Law tradition would save him.
 - 2. In actuality, he was persecuting the church and far from the righteousness needed for salvation.
 - 3. He found this out and later wrote Romans 3:20.
- B. God's law can be compared to a mirror.
 - 1. The purpose of the mirror is not to wash us, but to show us the dirt and drive us to use soap and water.
 - 2. The purpose of the Law is to show us our sin and drive us to Christ and His cleansing blood.
 - 3. Simply keeping the Law can't save us because no one can keep it perfectly.
- C. The problem is not with the Law as Paul points out in verse 8.
 - 1. The problem is us and our thinking.
 - 2. Thus, we need to understand the proper use of the Law.

III. The proper use of God's law.

- A. Paul tells us the law was not made for a righteous man.

1. Paul is probably referring to the Mosaic Law here, just as he did in verses 7-8.
 2. His list of sins is parallel to the 10 Commandments.
 3. With reference to the righteous man, he must be referring to someone who has been justified in Christ through faithful obedience to Him.
 4. A merely good man or a self-righteous man is still in contrast to God's word and is an enemy of God.
- B. Paul is referring to those who have been made righteous by faith in Christ.
1. This person is not under Law but under grace (Romans 6:14).
 2. This does not mean that they are lawless; they are under the "law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus (Romans 8:2), also simply called the law of Christ (1 Corinthians 9:1).
- C. Paul doesn't mean the Law has no benefit for believers, for it reveals God's righteous character and how we should please Him.
- D. The law is for the lawless because it speaks to the sinner to reveal his sin and convict him of it.
- E. As you look at this list of sins, we might say, "Paul's not talking about me, I've never done these things."
1. Have you never rebelled against God or been ungodly?
 2. Have you never been unholy or profane?
 3. Have you never thought ill towards your parents or struck out at them in some way?
 4. Have you never been angry enough to kill someone?
 5. Have you never had an immoral thought?
 6. Have you never lied, stolen or desired that of another?
- F. We all have been guilty of most if not all of these things in life.
- G. Thus, the law has pointed out to us our sinfulness and it only takes being guilty on one count to be guilty of all.
- H. Many people think they're doing God a favor or have the attitude, "I'll try Jesus and see if He makes me happy."
- I. We need to know God's Law so that it can reveal to us God's holiness and our sinfulness and be convicted of it.

IV. Be driven to the gospel for salvation.

- A. The fact that the law is not for the righteous but for sinners is in accord with the gospel of the glory of the blessed God.
- B. Jesus redeemed us from the curse of the law (Galatians 3:13).
- C. The gospel brings spiritual healing.
 1. The word sound means healthy or whole.
 2. This is a predominant theme in Timothy and Titus.
 - a. It's used 8 times in this sense.

- b. No where else in the New Testament is it used this way.
 - 3. No matter how spiritually diseased we may be, the gospel can heal us.
 - 4. Religion can clean up the outward person, but only the blood of Jesus can cleanse the inward man.
 - 5. We struggle with sin each day, but through the gospel, we can have daily deliverance from sin's power.
 - D. The gospel reveals the glory of the blessed God.
 - 1. God's glory is the beauty of His attributes.
 - 2. The gospel reveals His mercy, grace and love.
 - 3. This idea of the "blessed God" does not mean men blessing God, but that God is blessed (truly happy) because He is perfect.
 - 4. The source of all true happiness is found in God through the gospel.
 - E. The gospel is entrusted to redeemed sinners to proclaim to lost sinners.
 - 1. Paul said, "with which I have been entrusted."
 - 2. Paul will say he was chief of sinners but God saved him and entrusted him with the job of preaching the gospel.
 - 3. God doesn't save us to live for ourselves, but to preach His message that saved us.
 - 4. God uses redeemed sinners to take the message to lost sinners.

From a sermon by John Piper