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Mini Study - 55

The Law and Ethics The Step Beyond the Law

(Romans 8:10-17) "And if Christ be in you, the body is dead because of sin; but the Spirit is life because of righteousness. {eq·ui·ty}.
1. The state, quality, or ideal of being just, impartial, and fair. **2.** Something that is just, impartial, and fair. **3.** Law. **a.** Justice applied in circumstances covered by law yet influenced by principles of ethics and fairness. **b.** A system of jurisprudence supplementing and serving to modify the rigor of common law. **c.** An equitable right or claim.

The "law" seems to be viewed differently from the Old to the New Testament. Most, however, think the New "does away" with that "harsh, oppressive law." Yet, how do we explain the apparent difference? The law directs us in the way we must act to avoid social and personal conflict and establish justice. This is very clear in the "Old." The "New" certainly upholds the "Law" but there is a new dimension added. Let's call that ethics. Principles, morals, ideals, equity, righteousness and wisdom are all closely related terms.

• (Proverbs 8:22-23) *"The LORD possessed me [wisdom] in the beginning of His way, before His works of old. {23} I was set up from everlasting, from the beginning, or ever the earth was."*

Wisdom is the art of reaching one's end by the use of the **right** means. We may also say that it is the appropriate interpretation and application of the law. It deals with reason and purpose. It appears, here, that God created **all** things with or by sound reason and purpose.

Ample references are given to both "law" and "ethics" throughout the Bible, but we must consider that hardheaded and hardhearted Israel found it impossible to even obey the law. Today, Christians generally make an honest (but often feeble) attempt to keep the law. The great shortfall comes in ethical procedure. That is made pointedly clear in Jesus' admonitions to the Pharisees, the importance of mercy, and hundreds of directives in the Epistles.

• (Romans 6:16) *"Know ye not, that to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are to whom ye obey; whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness?"*

I might paraphrase this by saying: "You are liberated from sin and have submitted yourself to the higher God ordained ethically principled administration of the law."

Jesus even gave a pointed example of the importance of properly and mercifully applying the law when He said: "..., *The Sabbath was made for man, and not man for the Sabbath.*" (Mark 2:27) And He backed it up by healing on the Sabbath. Paul emphasizes our obligation to rise above, to go beyond the requirements of the law when he said:

• (1 Thessalonians 5:22) *"Abstain from all appearance of evil."*

It's not enough to just keep the law; we are to know, understand, and keep the law and apply the law to ourselves and others in a fair, merciful, righteous and ethical manner.

*Request the free articles:
The Law, Blessing or Burden and Are Christians Free from the Law?*

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