



2 Cor. 5:18

# Open Face

*One interest will prevail, one subject will swallow up all others. Christ our Righteousness*

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## Perfected Forever

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Very early in my experience as a Christian I developed a strong desire to be perfect. I read of the experience of the great Bible patriarchs and I developed a deep desire to be like them.

*There was a man in the land of Uz, whose name was Job; and that man was perfect and upright, and one that feared God, and eschewed evil. (Job 1:1)*

*These are the generations of Noah: Noah was a just man and perfect in his generations, and Noah walked with God. (Gen 6:9)*

I remember the intensity of my desire, the strong efforts I put forth to become what I imagined these men to have been. I endeavored to always speak the right words, eat the right food, wear the right clothing and to think the right thoughts. I tried hard, really hard, but somehow I never experienced one single day when I could say, "I made it, today I have been perfect!" As the years passed I experienced a great deal of frustration

and as I grew older this desire for perfection became more and more like something to be dreamed about but never to be experienced.

From where I stand today I can look back and see that my understanding was very confused but I can also see that there are millions of well-meaning Christians who are experiencing the same kind of confusion and misunderstanding which caused me so much frustration back in those days.

Fourteen years ago when the Lord opened my understanding I came to a true appreciation of what it means that Christ is my righteousness. Since that day my understanding of the Bible has gone through a revolutionary change and I have come to understand many of its teachings in a very different way. This includes the doctrine of perfection.

### THE MEANING OF "PERFECT"

In the Merriem Webster dictionary, the first definition given for the word "perfect," is, "being entirely without fault or defect : FLAWLESS." I daresay that when we speak of perfection this is what comes to the mind of almost everybody. This was what I believed back then and it is still what I believe today, nothing has changed in my understanding of what perfect means. What has changed drastically is my understanding of how to attain to that experience of perfection!

As the years passed and I became more familiar with the Bible, I came to realize that the word, "perfect," as used in the King James version of the Bible, does

not always mean to be living in a condition where a person's behavior is absolutely without flaw. For example, Noah, whom the Bible describes as being a perfect man, became drunk and lay naked in his tent. Job who is also described as being perfect, was rebuked by God for being self-righteous and misjudging God. In other words, these men were not perfect in an absolute sense. When the Bible says that they were perfect, it does not mean that they were absolutely without fault, what it means is that they were upright in their behavior according to the standards of the times in which they lived. When their peers looked at the way they lived, they could find no reason to fault them.

The book of Hebrews uses the word "perfect," perhaps more often than any other book in the Bible and it was in the reading of this book that I obtained my most precious understanding of biblical perfection. As used in this book, the word perfect is not focusing on the issue of whether or not God's people still continue to fail in their behavior, it is not saying that those who are in Christ never again make a mistake. The meaning here is different and it is not focused on the behavior of the worshipers, but rather on something that Christ did. Hebrews chapter 10 in particular, focuses on this issue of God's people being made perfect and helps us to un-

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Open Face is dedicated to the promotion and the restoration of apostolic Christianity. In particular to the restoration of those truths which have been cast down to the ground and trampled underfoot by the papacy, and adopted by her daughters.

Our purpose is to motivate our readers to commit themselves wholly to the task of personal preparation for the coming of the Lord, and to the taking of the final warning message to every nation, kindred, tongue and people.

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derstand what the word really means.

*For the law having a shadow of good things to come, and not the very image of the things, can never with those sacrifices which they offered year by year continually make the comers thereunto perfect. (Heb 10:1)*

Although Paul here refers to, “sacrifices”, he is really speaking of the principle behind the entire law and he explains that the law consisted only of shadows, or vague representations of future realities – things which were to come.

Now notice that Paul says that the law could never make those who worshiped, **perfect**. Here, Paul uses the word to mean, “being complete,” not lacking in any area. He clearly says that the law could never provide this kind of perfection, but how does he prove his point? He proves it by stating a simple fact: if the law had achieved its purpose then there would have been no more need for sacrifices to be offered. If the

worshippers had been made complete, or had been perfected, then in that instant the sacrifices and the other elements of the law would have become totally unnecessary because the law would have accomplished its purpose. So what was this purpose which the law could never accomplish? Paul explains it in the next verse:

*For then would they not have ceased to be offered? because that the worshippers once purged should have had no more conscience of sins. (Heb 10:2)*

### SIN CONSCIOUSNESS

So what God wanted was that the worshippers should have been made clean in such a way that they would have had no more conscience, or rather, consciousness of sin. This is the perfection which Paul is speaking about, it is a state in which the worshippers no longer have any consciousness of sin. Another way of putting this is that the worshippers should no longer have a guilty conscience, they would no longer have a sense of not being acceptable, no longer have a sense of being unfit, no longer be fearful or uncomfortable in the presence of God. Sin consciousness is what gives us a sense of condemnation and makes us afraid of God. So Paul says that once the worshippers are cleansed they have been made perfect and that this perfection consists of a state in which they no longer have an awareness of any barrier between themselves and God. Their conscience is now purged from that awareness of uncleanness.

Now here is an important point: the law oriented person will say, “yes, we no longer have any guilty conscience – until we commit the next sin, until the next time we transgress the law.” But let us consider this for a moment, isn’t this exactly what was happening under the old system of the law? When they offered a sacrifice they felt forgiven and then there was relief, but this only lasted until the next time they committed another act of transgression and then they needed another sacrifice! With each transgression, sin consciousness or a guilty conscience returned. It is

very important that we understand this point. The question is, does the same situation exist under the new covenant? When a person has been forgiven and given a clean conscience, if he happens to transgress the law again does he return to that state of sin consciousness? Does he return to that state of a scarred conscience? If this were the case then how could Paul say that the worshippers “once purged,” have no more conscience of sins? We would be in the same condition as the people who lived under the system of the law, purged periodically, but then returning to the state and the consciousness of sin over and over, every time we transgress.

So what does it mean? Does it mean that once we are purged we stop transgressing forever? Or does it mean that even if we transgress it is not a problem with God.? We have only these two options, either we stop transgressing completely, or if we do transgress it does not bring us back to a state of sin consciousness, does not produce in us a guilty conscience. These are the only two options, but both of these options leave some people alarmed.

Option number one concerns us because all of us who are Christians know that even after we gave our lives to Christ, we have not lived without doing things that were wrong. We cannot say that we have not transgressed, we may say that we no longer live the lives where we **habitually** transgress, but we cannot say that we have never transgressed since we gave our lives to Christ. So if this means that once we are purged we can never again transgress, then it puts us all in a troubling situation, it implies that we were never really purged.

The other alternative is that even if we transgress it no longer results in a guilty conscience, it no longer creates a barrier between us and God, and this alternative also causes great alarm. The logical question is this, if we teach such a thing, that Christians no longer have a guilty conscience even when they do wrong, will we not lead people to become comfortable in wrong-doing and to treat

transgression lightly? Is it not going to make people libertine and careless? Is it not going to make people think that sinning does not matter anymore? But as we continue in our study we will see that there is a resolution to this seeming dilemma.

### GOD'S WILL DONE

In verse three Paul says,

*But in those sacrifices there is a remembrance again made of sins every year. For it is not possible that the blood of bulls and of goats should take away sins. (Heb 10:3,4)*

Through the sacrifices, sin was being remembered again every year, in other words, there had to be sin consciousness. Every year as they offered those sacrifices they were being reminded that they were sinners, that sin needed to be taken care of. But now, look at what Paul says in verse 5:

*Wherefore when he cometh into the world, he saith, Sacrifice and offering thou wouldest not, but a body hast thou prepared me: (Heb 10:5)*

In this verse Jesus was speaking through the psalmist David. Here he tells us plainly that God did not desire sacrifices and offerings, he did not want them. They served a purpose in terms of teaching people but other than that they had no purpose, they had no benefit in themselves. God never enjoyed the smell of burning animal flesh, he never enjoyed the sight of animals being slaughtered. But what did God really want? He answers the question by saying, "a body hast thou prepared me." This is what God really wanted. God had a plan for somebody to put an end to sin forever, and so he prepared a body for this person. In this body God's purposes would be fulfilled through this person, and this is what God really wanted. Jesus continued by saying,

*Then said I, Lo, I come (in the volume of the book it is written of me,) to do thy will, O God. (Heb 10:7)*

So here he declares plainly that he was coming to do the will of God and as we have seen, that will of God is that his

people should have no more conscience of sin, no more awareness of guilt. He was going to do something to purge them so thoroughly from sin that the issue of a guilty conscience would never arise again!

*Above when he said, Sacrifice and offering and burnt offerings and offering for sin thou wouldest not, neither hadst pleasure therein; which are offered by the law; Then said he, Lo, I come to do thy will, O God. He taketh away the first, that he may establish the second. (Heb 10:8-9)*



Paul mentions taking away "the first," and establishing "the second," what is he referring to? The first refers to the sacrifices and offerings along with the law which required them. This "first" method of worshiping God was taken away in order that God could establish the second way. This second way is not through the shadowy services of the law, but through Christ in the body that was prepared for him. This is the second way that was established when the first was taken away. It was through this second way that the will of God was fulfilled. And what was that will? The next verse tells us:

*By the which will we are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all. (Heb 10:10)*

This is one of the reasons why I object to those people who tell me that sanctification is something which is supposed to last for our entire lifetime. I know that there is a concept of sanctification which suggests that sanctification is a long drawn out process of continual improvement, but I prefer to get my definitions from the Bible and in the Bible, sanctification is something that takes place in a moment, it is not

a long drawn out process. It is something that happens once, and once you are sanctified that is the end of the experience of sanctification. From that point on you are already sanctified and it is not a process where you are continually involved in being sanctified every day. According to the verse, by the will of God we are sanctified, or we have been sanctified and this experience is, "once for all." It has happened, it is done, it is over. So it is in this sense that we have been perfected, we have been sanctified, we have been set apart for a holy purpose, once and for all and forever.

Now here is the important point; in the old covenant under the system of the law, you were declared acceptable to God if you were obedient, if you kept the law, Jehovah would be your God and you would be his child. This was the condition of the old covenant, you had to perform in order to be accepted (Deut 6:25). The new covenant is built on an entirely different premise, a different principle. First of all in the new covenant sin is understood to be something which is not limited to your actions, but is more related to your relationship with God. You are a sinner if you are separated from God, that is the basic, new covenant understanding of sin.

### SIN ELIMINATED

So under the new covenant, what if you happen to transgress the law, but you have not rejected Christ in your life, do you then go back to being a sinner? Absolutely not! You're still a person who is in Christ, you're still a child of God, you have not broken the relationship with God because you committed a single wrong action. Yes, of course you seek to correct the wrong, of course you set out to not repeat that wrong action because your aim in life and your pleasure in life is to please and to glorify God, but you do not stop being a Christian, you do not go back to being a sinner. When you have a small child, a baby who is learning to walk he will fall many times, he will make mistakes but this does not mean that he stops



being your child. It means that the child has a problem that you're going to work on together until he does not fall anymore. As the Bible says,

*Being confident of this very thing, that he which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ: (Phil 1:6)*

He is the author and finisher of our faith, Jesus has started a good work in us and he will finish it. We do not stop being his simply because we may stumble and falter along the way.

Under the old covenant they were accepted or rejected on the basis of their performance. It was, "do good and live," but under the new covenant our relationship to God is dependent on our faith in Jesus Christ, not on our performance. Our performance has been taken out of the way and it has nothing to do with the relationship we now have with God. God did this by giving Jesus to die for our sins. So the death of Christ on our behalf has taken care of every sin we have ever done, every sin which we do today, and every sin which we will ever do! It took care of everyone's sin in all ages and for all time! If it is taken care of you cannot still be carrying that sin, it can no longer be a factor between you and God. So we are set apart for God and this is what Paul says. We are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ, "once for all," praise God!

*And every priest standeth daily ministering and offering oftentimes the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins: But this man, after he had offered one sacrifice for sins for ever, sat down on the right hand of God; (Heb 10:11-12)*

Let us not miss the point that Paul is making here: Jesus completed his work and sat down on the right hand of God. I don't understand this to mean that Jesus has been sitting on one seat in heaven for the past 2000 years, but the point that Paul is making is that, as far as taking away sin is concerned, Jesus' job is over. As far as that particular task is concerned he is done, he has sat down, he will never again have to deal

with that particular issue. And that is why our sin never again becomes an issue with God, we never again need to have a guilty conscience. We never again need to come before God with the feeling that we are not accepted.

When my grandson was about three or four years old, he called me from my home one day, while I was in the USA. He started the conversation by stating quite cheerfully, "Grandpa, I messed up the place!" Normally when a child has done something wrong he is reluctant to talk about it, but the relationship between us was such that he knew that no matter what he did, it would never create a barrier between us or make me negative towards him. So he was quite cheerful and completely relaxed as he told me of the wrong that he had done. This serves as an illustration for me of the kind of relationship that I ought to have with God. Our misdemeanors, our transgressions, our failings, our shortcomings, none of these things can come between us and God anymore! We are not accepted on the basis of our behavior, we are accepted in the beloved (Eph 1:6). So God has put my salvation in a place where it is never in jeopardy, the only way I can lose it is if I reject Jesus Christ.

So he offered one sacrifice for sins forever and then he sat down on the right hand of God. His job was over, he was finished with the task of saving men. He had cleared away the barrier and reconciled his people to his father, sin would never again be an obstruction between God and human beings.

*For by one offering he hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified. (Heb 10:14)*

We already saw in verse 10 that we are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all. Through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ we have been sanctified, or set apart for a holy purpose. Now that we have been set apart for this holy purpose, what is our condition? We have been "perfected," forever! What this means is that our consciences are perfect, or, are perfectly clean. We no

longer have any consciousness of sin, no longer have a guilty conscience. Practically this means that there no longer exists a barrier between us and God. So we're perfect in the sense that our consciences are free and we are perfect in the sense that we are completely, absolutely qualified for salvation. There is nothing lacking, nothing missing, no performance necessary on our part. Yes we do walk in harmony with the good law, but we don't do this because it is necessary for salvation, we do it because it is a part of the new nature which we have been given in Christ.

A few verses later on Paul refers to the new covenant mentioned in Jeremiah chapter 31:

*This is the covenant that I will make with them after those days, saith the Lord, I will put my laws into their hearts, and in their minds will I write them; And their sins and iniquities will I remember no more. (Heb 10:16-17)*

He is reinforcing the point that from way back in the days of Jeremiah when God had promised this new covenant he had stated clearly that one condition of this new covenant was that under it the sins of God's people would be remembered no more! They would never again be an issue between God and his people.

*Now where remission of these is, there is no more offering for sin. (Heb 10:18)*

There is never again any need of an offering for sin. Why? It is because sin has been brought to an end in the relationship between God and his people. It is nonexistent, abolished from the picture forever through Jesus! This is how amazing God's grace is, this is how complete salvation is through Jesus! The terrible tragedy is that in spite of this complete and perfect salvation many will still be lost, some because they are ignorant of the good news, and others because they still insist on offering God their own works as a part of the process of salvation.

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# Legalism

## GOOD LEGALISM

First of all let us note that legalism is not necessarily bad. It is usually a good idea to be legalistic where the laws of a country are concerned. Being legalistic about driving within the speed limit will save us from getting a ticket, but more importantly, it is a safer way that reduces accidents and deaths! Even in religion, there was a time when it was good for God's people to be legalists. When God gave the law to Israel at Mount Sinai it was accompanied by strict details about how they were to behave in almost every aspect of their lives. The law covered issues such as how to cook a baby goat, what to do if one found a bird's nest, and even rules about going to the bathroom! God's people were required to be legalistic in their approach to these rules, meaning that any deviation from what was commanded was frowned upon by God and in some cases could even mean a death sentence! Their lives were to be governed by the rule of the written, legal law in every respect. This was legalism, but it was God who instituted the system and in the context of the people God was dealing with and the time in which they lived, this legalism was good, because it was exactly what was needed in those circumstances.

But what about in our lives as Christians, why does legalism now carry a negative implication?

## TWO KINDS OF LAW

Let us remind ourselves that there are two kinds of law which govern life. The first kind of law is the laws which we refer to as "legal laws. These laws consist of rules laid down by a governing authority, whether by God, or by human governments. These kinds of law are present in many different situations such as our families, our work places, our clubs and institutions etc. Basically they are the framework in which human beings operate in their association with others. These laws

function by requiring us to behave in a certain way and there are always penalties attached to these legal laws. If someone disobeys them he will suffer the penalty if his disobedience is discovered. The police, or whoever is in authority will see to it that the penalties are carried out.

The other kind of law governing life is natural law, consisting of principles of nature. Examples of these are the laws of physics, chemistry and the spiritual world, they consist of elements built into nature which require us to behave in a certain way. If we break these laws, there are also repercussions, but these repercussions are the consequences caused by natural forces, they are not penalties carried out by a governing authority. It is because of these natural laws why we don't put our hand in boiling water, we don't jump from a height of 50 feet, we don't try to run through a stone wall. We know the consequences, so we don't disobey those laws, unless we want to die or be badly injured.

The Bible teaches us that both these laws, legal and natural laws, are involved in religious experience. The question is, how are they involved and how should a Christian relate to them?

## THREE LAWS

In Romans chapters 7 and 8, the apostle Paul speaks of three laws which are involved in religious experience. One of these laws is a legal law, and the other two are natural laws. He refers to these three laws as:

The law of sin  
The law of God  
The law of the spirit

*I find then a law, that, when I would do good, evil is present with me. For I delight in the law of God after the inward man: But I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members.*



## WHAT IS LEGALISM?

The word "legalism" is most often used in a religious context and it usually refers to somebody who attaches undue importance to minor details in his religious practices. This kind of legalism was perfectly exemplified in the behaviour of the scribes and Pharisees of Jesus' day.

*Then came to Jesus scribes and Pharisees, which were of Jerusalem, saying, Why do thy disciples transgress the tradition of the elders? for they wash not their hands when they eat bread. (Matt 15:1-2)*

Of course, the word "legalism," is applied in different ways and with different understanding by different people, because we don't all agree on what is major and what is minor in terms of our religion. However, the word itself also suggests another meaning which can be applied in such a way that we don't have to be confused about what we really mean when we speak of "legalism."

"Legalism" is derived from the word, "legal," which of course refers to what is acceptable according to constituted law. Legal-ism therefore in its simplest definition signifies the method, or the way which is based on legal law. When applied to religion, it signifies an approach to life which focuses on the law as the foundation of our religion.

(Rom 7:21-23)

The first law he mentions is the one of which he says, "I find then a law." This is the law which he refers to as "the law of sin which is in my members." This law is not a legal law, it is a law of nature, it is a natural law which exists in the carnal man, or the natural man. Nobody instructs him to behave in this way, there is no legal requirement, it is something built into his nature. When he wants to do good, he finds himself doing evil, this is the way this law of sin works and as I said, it is a law of nature, it is not a legal law.

The second law he mentions is "the law of God," which he also refers to as "the law of my mind." He says that he delights in this law, meaning that he sees it as something good and desires to be in harmony with it. His mind appreciates and understands it and he wants to obey it. This of course refers to the legal law of the Ten Commandments. This is not a natural law, it is not something which his nature automatically does (unlike the first law). This is a law that he must first learn (with his mind), he must read it and learn its instructions, then he must try to obey it. It is also a law, but it operates in a different way than the first law.

Let us notice that the first law, the law of nature is stronger than the legal law. Although he wants to obey the legal law, the law of sin in his body is too strong. He finds himself obeying the law of sin and not the law of God. In fact, in verse 12 he says, "I am sold under sin." He describes himself as being a slave to sin! The laws of nature are always stronger than legal laws. Legal law can be ignored or disobeyed, but the laws of nature are irresistible.

But in chapter 8 Paul goes on to speak of the third law which describes a way to escape from the law of sin. A person is not compelled to be a slave of sin all his life.

*For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death. (Rom 8:2)*

This third law is referred to as "the law

of the spirit of life," and it set him free from the law of sin. The law of God, (the legal law of the commandments) could not accomplish this deliverance from sin because it is a legal law, and legal law cannot overcome natural law! Natural law can only be overcome by another natural law and this is what God has done for us, he has provided another law of nature to cancel the first one, the law of sin. This law of deliverance is the law of the spirit of life. God gives us the spirit of Christ in our hearts which is the experience of being born again. We receive a new spirit which puts the old nature to death and delivers us from the power of sin. The law of sin no longer controls our lives but instead, the law of the spirit rules in us. Now it is not only that our minds desire to do good, but it is also the natural way of our lives. We are no longer slaves to sin, but we are slaves to righteousness in a free and natural way!

When we understand this distinction between legal and natural law, and understand that God's way of deliverance and salvation through Christ is through a new, natural law, then we can see why seeking to serve God through the legal law of the commandments is a useless endeavor. Let us remember that there was nothing wrong with the legal law of the commandments, the real problem was that it could not solve the problem of the law of sin and therefore, as a tool for preventing sin, it was useless. With this understanding in mind, let us now examine some of the more difficult passages concerning the law in the New Testament and see what they really mean.

#### LETTER VS SPIRIT

In 2 Corinthians 3:6, the apostle Paul speaks of the difference between the Old Covenant and the New Covenant and he explains that the difference lies in the way we relate to the law.

*Who also hath made us able ministers of the new testament; not of the letter, but of the spirit: for the letter killeth, but the spirit giveth life. (2Cor 3:6)*

He explains that the New Covenant is

"not of the letter, but of the spirit." What is he really referring to? The verse which follows makes it clear that he is speaking of the law, but the question is, which law?

*But if the ministration of death, written and engraven in stones, was glorious, so that the children of Israel could not steadfastly behold the face of Moses for the glory of his countenance; which glory was to be done away: How shall not the ministration of the spirit be rather glorious? (2Cor 3:7-8)*

When he refers to the letter, he is speaking of what was "written and engraven in stones," therefore he is referring to the legal law of the commandments. As we saw earlier on, this law is helpless in the task of overcoming the law of sin. It requires right doing, but it cannot provide any help. This law is the foundation of the Old Covenant, a set of rules requiring obedience which could not accomplish what it demanded. This is why Paul refers to it as "the ministration of death," it condemned a person to death for disobedience and that was all it could do.

But Paul says, "the spirit giveth life." (as opposed to the letter which kills). This is another kind of ministry and it is the ministry of the New Covenant. This ministry is the work of the spirit, not the legal law, and we have already seen that the "law of the spirit of life" is a natural law. It is the law of Christ whereby he places a new spirit within us which *naturally* produces the fruit of righteousness within us. So the spirit gives life. What we see then is that Paul is contrasting legal law with natural law and he refers to legal law as "the letter," and he refers to the natural law as "the spirit." One was written on stone, the other is written in the heart, one condemns to death, the other produces life, one induces continual failure, the other continuous victory. Both these laws focus on producing righteousness, but one only demands it, while the other fulfills it.

As we read through the New Testament and especially the writings of Paul, we need to constantly keep this understand-



ing in our minds because it will greatly enhance our comprehension of what Paul is saying. Whenever he speaks of the law in a negative way, he is referring to the written law, the letter, the commandments written on stone and he does not say they are bad, but he says they are bad as a way of dealing with sin because in that context, they are completely hopeless. So with this understanding we can see why a legalist, somebody who approaches God from the perspective of the legal law, is bound to have continual failure in his religious experience.

### NOT UNDER THE LAW

Now we can understand what Paul means when he says that Christians are “not under the law.”

*But if ye be led of the Spirit, ye are not under the law. (Gal 5:18)*

This verse is no longer difficult to understand. To be led of the spirit means to have the spirit of Christ within and to have the “law of the spirit of life” working in our lives. If this is true, then we are being controlled by natural law and therefore, we are not under the legal law of the commandments. In other words, it is not the legal law that governs our behaviour, but the natural law of the spirit. We are looking at two different systems of government; it is either to be governed by legal law – the commandments, or to be governed by natural law – the spirit. Paul says that if we are governed by the spirit, then we are not under (governed by) the law (the legal law). This is perfectly in harmony with all that Paul teaches elsewhere in his writings, it is clear that Christians cannot be under the government of the legal law because Paul tells us plainly,

*Knowing this, that the law is not made for a righteous man, but for the lawless and disobedient, for the ungodly and for sinners, for unholy and profane, for murderers of fathers and murderers of mothers, for manslayers, (1Tim 1:9)*

If we are still sinners, still carnal, without the spirit of Christ dwelling in us, then the law of the commandments still

dominates our lives. It is the only way to restrain our evil behavior and it helps to prove to us that we are helpless to do good. But in Christ we do not need this government of the legal law because we have been set free from sin’s dominion.

*For sin shall not have dominion over you: for ye are not under the law, but under grace. (Rom 6:14)*

To be under the law means to be governed by the letter, to be governed by the commandments and as we have seen, under that government the law of sin dominates your life. You have no power over sin. But Paul says, this is not to be, sin shall not dominate your life, why? Because you are not governed by legal law, but by natural law! You are under grace! You are governed by the spirit which is the gift of God’s grace, so sin cannot dominate your life because the person that is born of God does not live under sin’s dominion. Christ in you destroys the power of sin (1 John 3:9)! It becomes clear then that what God’s people really need is to be delivered from the government of the letter and to come under the government of the spirit. This is exactly what Christ has done for us under the new covenant.

### DELIVERED FROM THE LAW

*But now we are delivered from the law, that being dead wherein we were held; that we should serve in newness of spirit, and not in the oldness of the letter. (Rom 7:6)*

We are “delivered from the law,” praise God! We are delivered from the government of the law and Paul explains what he means. This deliverance means that we do not serve God in the “oldness of the letter.” We do not serve by way of the commandments, we are not directed or controlled by the **legal law**, we are not legalists. We serve in “newness of spirit.” That is, we are controlled, dominated by, governed by the spirit of Christ and operate on the natural law of the spirit of life. The thing that held us a captive to sin (the carnal nature) has been put to death by Christ and we now walk with him in newness of spirit. This is why we are no longer

legalists, we do not serve God in the way of legal law, but in the way of spiritual law.

### END OF THE LAW

Our relationship with the law has ended. First of all there was the question of, “how can we overcome the sin of the carnal nature?” We saw that God set us free by delivering us from the government of the letter, and placing us under the government of the spirit. We have been set free from the dominion of both sin and the law. But there is also the question of, “how are we made acceptable to God? What about the record of our past sins, and what if we happen to fall into sinful behaviour, what then?” In such a case, does not the law come back into the picture?

In Romans 10:4 Paul shows us that such a thing is not in God’s plan. There is one way of righteousness before, during and after a person becomes a Christian. There is one way and one way only and it is not the legal law.

*For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth. (Rom 10:4)*

The word, “end” is an interesting word. It can mean, “goal,” “purpose,” or, “termination.” But all of these meanings apply to what Paul is saying about the law here. Of course one purpose of the law was to point people to Christ. In Romans 7:7 Paul says that it was the law that made him aware that he was a sinner. Without this awareness a person will feel no need of Christ, so one purpose or goal of the law was to direct people to Christ or to make sinners aware of their need of Christ. However, Christ is also the end of the law in the sense that he brings it to an end, he terminates it. First of all it is terminated as a governing agency in the life of the person who has found Christ as we have already seen. In Christ, we are not under the law. But notice that the verse says he is the end of the law **for**

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## Perfected Forever

Continued from page 3

In a sense, in Christ you cannot sin anymore. What do we mean by this? Sin is something offensive which creates a barrier between a person and God. Because of Jesus' one great sacrifice this is no longer possible, sin has been removed as a factor in the relationship between us and God, so we cannot sin anymore, in Christ. Secondly, a more complete understanding of sin is that it is a state of separation from God and not just an action of transgression. In this broader understanding of what sin is, nobody who is in Christ can be a sinner, in order to fall into that category he would first of all have to reject Christ and step outside of the relationship with him. This is what Paul refers to a little later on in the same passage where he says that if a person sins willfully after having received Christ then there is no more salvation available to such a person.

*For if we sin wilfully after that we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins, But a certain fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation, which shall devour the adversaries. (Heb 10:26-27)*

So we see that the person who is in Christ does not sin willfully, meaning that he does not live in separation from Christ. The person who willfully chooses to do this has rejected his salvation and can no longer be saved. This one sin of willfully rejecting Christ after already having come to know him and to experience salvation, puts us in a place where we would be lost forever.

So under the new covenant the concept of what it means to be a sinner changes. Our status is related to one thing only and it is our relationship to Jesus Christ, not our performance. We who are in Christ are perfect, perfect in our salvation and perfect in our conscience. The great danger and the only danger is that we should choose to turn from Christ.



## A Band of Ragamuffins

### A STRANGE REALITY

One of the remarkable things about the independent movement which is sweeping through the ranks of Christendom and Adventism, is the fact that it is a movement largely led by common people from the ordinary walks of life. There are not many ordained ministers, not many recognized theologians involved in it and most of those in the forefront have very little formal theological training. Formal training can be a valuable tool in the effective accomplishment of any task, but the record of the Christian Church reveals that when God was seeking for people to carry out his greatest mission he did not seek for scholars. The following comment from the book of Acts tells us a great deal:

*Now when they saw the boldness of Peter and John, and perceived that they were unlearned and ignorant men, they marvelled; and they took knowledge of them, that they had been with Jesus. (Acts 4:13)*

“Unlearned and ignorant,” is not what we would expect from men chosen to be teachers of the greatest message ever given to the human race, yet as far as formal training was concerned, this was the truth. This was something deliberately designed by God, in seeking for people who could be used in proclaiming this vital, but unpopular message, he turned from those who had been trained in the higher schools of learning and selected men who had not been infected by the traditions of the schoolmen.

These chosen men were indeed a strange crew. The most prominent of them, Peter, James and John were fishermen. Matthew was a tax collector and Simon was a zealot, a member of a group dedicated to overthrowing the Romans by violent means. There was nobody who was outstanding as a scholar, and not even one person from among the elders, the Pharisees, the Scribes or the Levites.

Later of course, Jesus did choose Paul who was an outstanding theologian and evidently highly trained in matters of religion. Paul became one of the greatest teachers of the gospel, but his calling was an exception to the rule. Every other recognizable leader in the early church came from among the common people.

This was a necessity, in a sense, God had no choice. The education exalted by men had not prepared its students to receive or understand the things of God, there was a great deal of show and superficial knowledge, but very little of the true understanding of the character of God. Jesus himself, the author of the Christian faith was similarly protected from the “higher” education of his time.

*Now about the midst of the feast Jesus went up into the temple, and taught. And the Jews marvelled, saying, How knoweth this man letters, having never learned? (John 7:14-15)*

This is one of the reasons why He was hated, rejected and ultimately killed by the Jews. His approach to God was completely contrary to the ways in which they had been taught and in fact, his teaching endangered their entire system of religion and exposed their educational system as being nothing but pretentiousness and sham. This is the reason why they could not tolerate him and eventually had him crucified.

Today, the situation is still the same; if you visit a church service you will most likely be treated to a long introduction where you will hear of all the many scholarly accomplishments of the speaker. The emphasis today, is not on the spiritual life of those who lead out in religion, but on the time they have spent in formal study, earning degrees. You will not find many who fit the qualification emphasized as an aspect of the New Covenant.

*And all thy children shall be taught*



*of the LORD; and great shall be the peace of thy children. (Isa 54:13)*

### **HISTORY REPEATS**

Human nature does not change and what men have done in the past, they will do again in the future. Those who have obtained their ideas about God from the educational systems developed by men, inevitably become locked into a certain way of thinking and have minds that are closed to the leading of God's spirit. It is sad, but true. There are a few who pass through these systems of education and still, end up with eyes open to the truths in the word of God, rather than to the dogma of their particular denomination, but such men are few and far between – a true rarity. This is why God still has had to continue to find his true messengers from among the common people, untrained in the sophistries of the schoolmen.

*For ye see your calling, brethren, how that not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called: But God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise; and God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty; (1Cor 1:26-27)*

### **A RAGAMUFFIN ARMY**

The Bible is full of stories and illustrations which give us much encouragement as we encounter the challenges of the situation which exists today. One story which is particularly relevant is the story of David's experience as a fugitive, during the reign of King Saul.

*David therefore departed thence, and escaped to the cave Adullam: and when his brethren and all his father's house heard it, they went down thither to him. And every one that was in distress, and every one that was in debt, and every one that was discontented, gathered themselves unto him; and he became a captain over them: and there were with him about four hundred men. (1Sam 22:1-2)*

Saul was the anointed king of Israel, he sat in the seat of government and power and Israel was run according to his directions. He was the man recog-

nized and obeyed by Israel. However, from the time that David killed the giant Goliath, Saul recognized that David was specially favoured by God and he developed a bitter jealousy and enmity towards him and tried time and time again to destroy him. God delivered him each time, but David realized that he could no longer remain where Saul could find him and this is when he went to dwell in the cave of Adullam.



When David departed to the wilderness, he became an outcast, a fugitive hunted by the authorities, a man with a price on his head. He could expect no justice from the judges or any of the leaders, his position seemed hopeless. But something strange happened, little by little individuals and small groups of people came to join him in his exile. The Bible tells us who these people were, they were the people who had nothing to lose, the people who were already outcast by society, people who did not belong, who had a grouse with the system. They were the distressed, those in debt, hunted for their failures, the discontented, fed up with the situation in Israel. These were the ones who came to join David's army, because nobody else would come. In other words, they were people who had nothing to lose. Those who were well off and comfortable had no reason under the sun to join up with a group of rebellious malcontents who surely seemed to be heading for early disaster!

Yet the Bible tells us that this group of misfits became an elite band of warriors, a guerrilla army that never lost

a single battle. In fact we learn that this tiny army of 600 men were really the ones who fought the battles of the Lord while David was an outcast, hunted and hated by Saul!

I believe that if we have eyes to see we can discern the same thing happening today. The people who have become involved in the independent movement are mostly people who started out being badly treated by the authorities in the church. Many of them were silenced, censored, disfellowshipped, stripped of their offices, ostracised simply because they asked uncomfortable questions. Maybe it was a doctrine, maybe it was an abuse of authority, maybe it was an injustice, but the response of those in authority drove people away and they sought a place where they could be free to serve God according to their consciences. Many of these have found themselves in a modern "Cave Adullam," a part of a ragamuffin army which is developing into an elite band, capable of fighting the battles of the Lord.

The truth is that those who have maintained their connection with the organized church are so conditioned to think submissively, to refrain from thinking independently that it is impossible for God to open their minds to the truths that are vital for them to hear. The church defines what is to be believed and taught and no member can step outside of those parameters. God cannot use those channels any more than he could use Saul and his army. God is raising up a ragamuffin army similar to David's band which fought the battles of the Lord from exile. Remember, God does not see as man sees.

*But the LORD said unto Samuel, Look not on his countenance, or on the height of his stature; because I have refused him: for the LORD seeth not as man seeth; for man looketh on the outward appearance, but the LORD looketh on the heart. (1Sam 16:7)*



# A Strong Immune System

*Lenworth Frankson*



The immune system is a defense system that protects against disease. It is comprised of many biological structures and processes. To function properly, an immune system must detect a wide variety of agents, known as pathogens, from viruses to parasitic worms, and distinguish them from the organism's own healthy tissue.

God has designed our immune system to perform a remarkable job of defending us against these disease-causing microorganisms. However, sometimes it fails and for some reason a germ invades successfully and makes us sick. So the questions that arise are; is there something that could have been done that would have prevented this and is it possible to intervene in the process and boost the immune system? Are there certain vitamins or herbal preparations that can help? Can we make lifestyle changes that assist in producing a super strong immune response?

The idea of boosting our immunity is appealing, but first and foremost we must understand that the immune system is not a single entity but a complex whole formed from related parts. For it to function well it requires balance and harmony and there are still many things that researchers don't know about the intricacies and interconnecting of the immune response. The effects of diet, exercise, age, psychological stress, and other factors that relate to the immune response, both in animals and in humans is still been researched. What we do know is that a healthy immune

system can defeat invading pathogens and general healthy living strategies are good ways to start giving our immune system the upper hand.

## **STRENGTHEN THE SYSTEM**

Our first line of defense is to choose a healthy lifestyle, which means following general good-health guidelines. Every part of your body, including your immune system, benefits when it is protected from the environmental assaults and strengthened by healthy living approaches, which include the following:

- Do not smoke.
- Follow a diet high in fruits and vegetables.
- Exercise regularly.
- Maintain a healthy weight.
- No alcohol.
- Get adequate sleep.
- Take steps to avoid infection, such as washing your hands frequently and cooking meat thoroughly.
- Try to minimize stress.

## **HEALTHY IMMUNIZATION**

Many products on store shelves claim to boost or support immunity. But the concept of boosting immunity actually makes little sense scientifically. Boosting the number of cells in your body (immune cells or others) is not necessarily a good thing. Why? Because attempting to boost the cells of your immune system is especially complicated seeing that there are so many different kinds of cells in the immune system that respond to different microbes in various ways. Which cells should you boost, and to what number? So far, scientists do not know the answer. What is known is that the body is continually generating immune cells. Our bodies produce many more lymphocytes (a type of white blood cells) than it can possibly use. The extra cells remove themselves through a natural process of cell death called apoptosis

(some before they see any action and some after the battle is won). No one knows how many cells or what mix of cells the immune system needs to function at its optimum level. However, there are some things that we can do to strengthen our immune system.

## **NEWSTART**

NEWSTART is a program that addresses and promotes ways to strengthen the immune system. NEWSTART was developed and is piloted by Dr. Neil Nedley who is the President of Weimar Institute. He is also a full-time practicing physician. Dr. Nedley's program has proven to have great success. This program, NEWSTART, promotes lifestyle changes based on eight fundamental principles proven to help individuals achieve optimum health: Nutrition, Exercise, Water, Sunlight, Temperance, Air, Rest and Trust. The program emphasizes that each portion bears its part in enhancing complete health.

## **NUTRITION**

Fruits and vegetables enhance immunity because of the abundance of micronutrients in them. High anti-oxidant fruits (Berries, Plums or Prunes) and vegetables (Cruciferous: broccoli, brussel sprouts, spinach, kale and garlic) are highly recommended as well as no sugar intake.

## **EXERCISE**

Exercise boosts your immune system within minutes. Try to find time to go for a walk (long or short) a couple times each day; start a vegetable/flower garden, or help a neighbor with outside chores. However, overdoing exercise (like running a marathon) suppresses our immune system. So choose an exercise that suites you in your location, but which is not too exhausting, and get moving!

## **WATER**

It is important to stay hydrated for good

health. Drinking a sip of water every 15 minutes will wash any bacteria or viruses into your stomach where your stomach acid will destroy them. Gargling salt water cuts down the risk of catching a cold. Hot and cold contrast showers (3 minutes hot/30 seconds cold, 3 times) increase white blood cell count and circulation in the blood and lymphatic systems. Frequent hand washing with soap and warm water helps to prevent the spread of germs.

### SUNLIGHT

Sunlight is antimicrobial and there is evidence that it can kill the flu virus including covid-19. Sunlight on the skin also produces vitamin D, which boosts immunity and enhances your mood. Spending time outside in nature, walking or gardening helps us not only to get more sunlight, but also exposes us to fresh air and promotes better rest.

### TEMPERANCE

Practice temperance in areas such as: the use of media (cellphones, electronic tablets, computers, TV, etc.), getting enough sleep, the kinds of food we eat and the amount we eat. Many people also struggle with habits like alcohol, smoking, or caffeine use, which lower and suppress the immune system. Hold on to promises in God's word when you are tempted:

*"...do not fear, for I am with you; do not be dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you and help you; I will uphold you with my righteous right hand". Isaiah 41:10*

### AIR

Go outside and breathe in the fresh air produced by trees. Research shows that outdoor air is a natural disinfectant. Fresh air can kill the flu virus and other harmful germs. Germs can circulate inside buildings, so on days when you can't get outside be sure to refresh the air by opening the windows and breathe deeply.

### REST

Sleep deprivation decreases the number of natural killer cells. Getting a good night's sleep boosts the immune system

by enhancing the T-cells in the body, which adhere to and destroy cells infected by pathogens or viruses. Sleep renews and heals worn down body systems. Sleep aids in natural melatonin production, which enhances immune response. In addition to the recommended 7-8 hours of sleep per night, studies show that the body benefits from a weekly rest. We can be thankful that the Lord gave us a rest day from the very beginning, giving us an example that we can follow for our physical and spiritual health today.

### TRUST IN GOD:

Resting your faith in God not only gives you spiritual and mental peace, but science is now studying its effects on physical healing and disease, in the lowering of cortisol levels and the increase of white blood cells. Trust that the Lord is giving us resources we need, not only for our own use, but also to share with and bless others.

*"And the peace of God, which passes all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus." Philippians 4:7*

God had designed our immune system to be a protective mechanism, designed to defend us against microbes, bacteria, toxins, viruses and parasites. If the immune system is severely weakened or worse, shuts down, within a few hours the body is invaded by a number of parasites, bacteria and microbes. If the immune system is working effectively and efficiently these things are unable to overrun our bodies. Interestingly, recent research suggests that there is a strong case to be made that the seemingly useless organ, the appendix, plays a strong role in supporting the immune system. It has been discovered that the appendix provides a safe haven for good intestinal bacteria to hang out in the gut, keeping certain infections at bay. No wonder the psalmist declares:

*"I will praise you, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made; Marvelous are your works, and that my soul knows very well"*

# Legalism

*Continued from page 7*

**righteousness.** In other words, as far as righteousness is concerned, as far as our acceptance with God is concerned, the law has come to an end. In the establishing and maintaining of our relationship with God, the law has no place, its involvement has come to an end. Under the old covenant, it had been understood that the way of being right with God was to obey all the commandments.

*And it shall be our righteousness, if we observe to do all these commandments before the LORD our God, as he hath commanded us. (Deut 6:25)*

It was acceptance by works. Failure to keep the commandments even in the slightest degree meant that a person could not be accepted by God, it meant that he was never going to be in a right relationship with God. The only way to be right with God, if a person took the way of the commandments, was to do every single one of them perfectly, without failing in the slightest degree. As James says, if we offend in one point, we are guilty of all (James 2:10)! This is why we are told in Galatians 3:10, that those who try to relate to God through the law are cursed!

*For as many as are of the works of the law are under the curse: for it is written, Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them. (Gal 3:10)*

But now, under the New Covenant, Christ has brought that system to an end. It is terminated, abolished, it does not exist anymore. "Christ is the end of the law **for righteousness!**" As far as being right with God is concerned, Christ has abolished the law. Instead of obedience to the law being our righteousness, instead of our performance producing righteousness, there is a new and perfect, living way.

*For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might*



*be made the righteousness of God in him. (2Cor 5:21)*

This is not just an idea that we are forcing into the Scriptures, this is something which the Bible is very forceful in declaring. It is not just that God has given us the gift of righteousness in Christ, there is also the emphasis that in this righteousness, the law has been eliminated! The legal law has nothing to do with this new covenant process of righteousness, it has been completely eliminated. Paul emphasizes that this righteousness is **without the law**.

*But now the righteousness of God without the law is manifested, being witnessed by the law and the prophets; (Rom 3:21)*

#### **ALL THINGS LAWFUL**

Now we come to what may be the most difficult, of all the statements that Paul has made concerning the law. Yet from

the perspective of what we have already examined, it becomes easy to understand.

*All things are lawful unto me, but all things are not expedient: all things are lawful for me, but I will not be brought under the power of any. (1Cor 6:12)*

Paul says that for him (and for all Christians) **all things are lawful!** What are the implications of this? It means that it is lawful to steal, to kill, to commit adultery, to break the Sabbath etc.!!! At the same time he adds, "but I will not be brought under the power of any." In other words he is saying, "I am free to do whatever I choose to do as far as the law is concerned, but I will not allow any sinful behaviour to have power over me." How can he say that he is free to break the law? How can he say that "all things are lawful," is this true? It is absolutely true! The point he is

making is that the legal law of the commandments has been removed from our experience as Christians, God does not relate to Christians through legal law anymore. So as far as the law is concerned, it cannot speak to me, it cannot control what I do, it has no authority over my life! For the person in Christ, all things are lawful! Does it mean that I will now live a life of carnality? No, of course not! I am now directed and led by the spirit of Christ within, which leads me in a higher way of righteousness than the commandments even could describe. So, as Paul says, "I will not be brought under the power of any." But this has nothing to do with the government of the commandments, it has everything to do with Christ governing me from within.



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