

The End Purpose of the Law



The Love of God (Part 12)
by Derek Prince

It's good to be with you again, sharing with you precious truths out of Scripture that have made the difference between success and failure in my life, and can do the same in yours.

The theme that we're studying together this week is The Love of God, one that's particularly appropriate for this season. If you can receive and apply in your life the truths that I'll be sharing with you, they will enable you to face the New Year with greater assurance and confidence than ever before.

In my talk yesterday I explained how it takes God's love to release our love. And I quoted the simple statement of the Apostle John in First John 4:19:

"We love because he first loved us." (NIV)

I pointed out that we cannot have or release the kind of love we're talking about until we first experienced it. We must experience it before we can release it to others. And John makes it clear in this passage that there is a kind of love that can only come from God through rebirth. Peter, likewise, says: "Love one another with a pure heart and fervently because you've been born again of the incorruptible seed of the Word of God." In other words it's the new birth that makes possible the release of this supernatural divine love.

The evidence that we know God is that we demonstrate this kind of love. John says, "He who love knows God. He who does not love, does not know God." That's a very simple separation between the two kinds of persons.

I pointed out in my talk yesterday that some people are saved by a stranger, just as if they had been on the point of drowning in a river, somebody had jumped in and pulled them out of the water and saved their lives. But they had never had any further acquaintance or relationship with the person who saved them. So there are some people who have been truly, (quote) "saved, converted, turned from their sin, began to lead a decent, righteous kind of life," but they don't know the Lord who saved them. The evidence that they don't know the

Lord is that they are not manifesting this kind of love to others. Because everyone that knows God, loves in this way.

Today I'm going to focus on the relationship between love and the law, which is a very important theme that has much about it in the Bible. Many people are perplexed or frightened by the thought of the law. And yet the basic purpose of the law is very simple. Love is the end of the law.

Let's look at something that Jesus said about this in Matthew chapter 22, verses 35-40. We read where Jesus is questioned by an expert in the law, that's the Law of Moses, and how Jesus answered. Matthew chapter 22, verses 35-40:

> "One of them, an expert in the law, tested him with this question: 'Teacher, which is the greatest commandment in the Law?' Jesus replied: 'Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.' This is the first and greatest commandment. [Jesus didn't hesitate. He came out with a very clear, definite answer. But then He went on...] And the second is like it: 'Love your neighbor as yourself.' [And then He commented...] All the Law and the Prophets hang on these two commandments." (NIV)

The two commandments are, "Love the Lord your God" and "Love your neighbor as yourself." And Jesus says, "All the Law and the Prophets [that's what we would call the Old Testament] hang on these two commandments."

Now I'm a simple minded person and I take things, you know, practically and simply. Let me imagine that I want to hang my jacket on a peg. If I'm going to hang my jacket on the peg, the peg has to be there before I hang the jacket up. So if the Law and Prophets hang on these two commandments, then these two commandments are primary, the Law and the Prophets are secondary. In other words, the basic issue in the Law is love for God and love for our neighbor.

Now often people think there was a tremendous switch in what God wanted between the Old Testament and the New. In the New Testament God wants love, but in the Old Testament it was something different. This is really a complete mistake. God has always wanted love. He wanted love for God and love for the neighbor under the Law. Under the New Testament, again, the primary requirement is love. What change between the Old Testament and the New was not God's objective, but the means to achieve the objective. The Law failed to achieve this objective, not because there was anything wrong with the Law, as Paul is very careful to point out, but because there is something wrong with human nature. This is stated by Paul in Romans 8, verse 3:

> "For what the law was powerless to do in that it was weakened by the sinful nature, [of man] God did by sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful man to be a sin offering." (NIV)

So the law couldn't do it because of the weakness of sinful man. So God had to make a sacrifice that dealt with man's sin in his weakness, remove this obstacle and permitted the love of God generated by the new birth to flow through the people who had been born again.

But the end purpose of the New Testament is precisely the same as the end purpose of the Old. I think both under the Old Testament and under the New, multitudes of God's people lost sight of the real objective and became very confused and uncertain. In First Timothy chapter 1, verse 5-7, Paul states the objective of the gospel message and ministry as clearly as it could be stated. 1 Timothy 1, 5-7:

> "'But the goal of our instruction is love [Notice that! 'The goal of our instruction as ministers of the gospel is love.' And then he lays down certain basic requirements for love...] from a pure heart and a good conscience and a sincere faith. [Those are three things that are needed if we are to have the kind of love that God wants in our lives... a pure heart,a good conscience a and sincere faith.' These are produced by the gospel. But the end is love. And then Paul goes on to say...] For some men, straying from these things [that's love out of a pure heart, a good conscience and sincere faith...] straying from these things, have turned aside to fruitless discussion, wanting to be teachers of the Law, even though they do not understand either what they are saying or the matters about which they make confident assertions." (NIV)

So if we ever turn aside in our teaching or our ministry from the ultimate objection of producing God's love in the lives of the people to whom we minister, all we end up is fruitless discussion. The King James Version uses a very vivid phrase, "vain jangling." Our preaching, our ministry, our activities just become a lot of empty noise. They accomplish nothing of permanent value.

I believe as Christians we all have to face this challenge. I certainly do in my own life. From time to time I ask myself, "What is my ministry producing." First in foremost in me and

then in those to whom I minister. If it doesn't ultimately produce love, everything I'm doing is wasted effort.

I want to look now at two beautiful phrases that James uses in his epistle about love, because I believe these two phrases give us a very wonderful insight into what love is and what it will do. The first phrase is found in the epistle of James, chapter 1, verse 25, where James says this:

> "But the man who looks intently into the perfect law that gives freedom, and continues to do this, not forgetting what he has heard, but doing it, he will be blessed in what he does." (NIV)

The perfect that give freedom. You may wonder what that law is, but if you go on a little further, James himself makes it plain. In the same epistle of James, chapter 2, verse 8, James says this:

> "If you really keep the royal law found in Scripture, 'love your neighbor as yourself,' you are doing right." (NIV)

There the phrase that James uses is, "the royal or kingly law" and he specifies it, "love your neighbor as yourself." Love is the kingly law. Love is the perfect law that gives freedom. Let's look at three phrases, briefly, that James uses. He calls it "the perfect law." In other words, it includes everything. It omits nothing. If you keep that law it will take care of every aspect and every requirement of God. Second, it's the law that gives freedom. You see if you are really motivated by sincere love you'll always be able to do what you want. Paul says, "Against that kind of fruit (the fruit of love) there is no law." You don't need to be restrained by any other law because love always does the right thing. And then he calls it the "royal law." It's the kingly law. When you walk in the law of this divine love for God and for your neighbor, you're living like a king. You see a king in a certain sense is above the law. He's above other laws, he's the king. That's the picture of a king. Of course, in today's democratic society it's a little difficult to adjust to that thought. But when James uses the phrase, "the royal or the kingly law," he's meaning you don't have to bother about all the other laws, because as long as you keep this law it takes care of all the rest.

So just think that over today as we close this talk, those three beautiful phrases about love. It's the perfect law. It's the law that gives freedom. It's the kingly law. You don't live like a slave. When you live by the law of love you live like a king. You've been set free and everything else that God requires is contained in that one law.

Well, our time is up for today but I'll be back with you again tomorrow at this same time. I'll be continuing, tomorrow, with this theme: The Love of God.

Radio Program

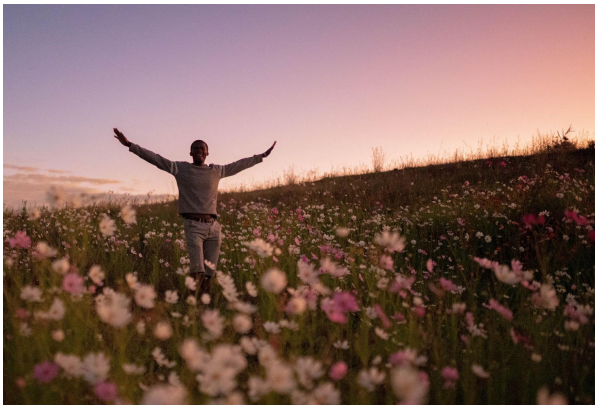
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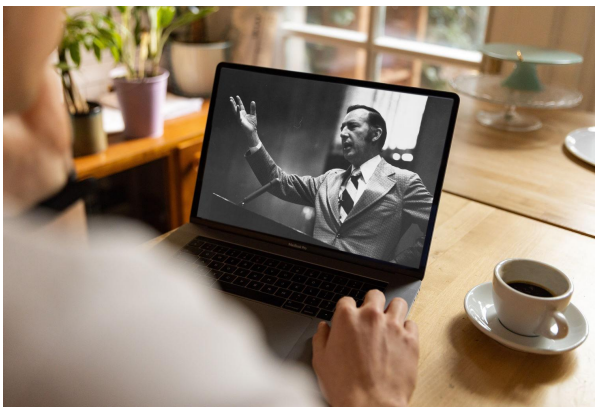
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