

In Light of Grace, Does Obedience Matter?

Does the doctrine of grace nullify the law? Does God still expect us to at least attempt to obey His Word?

The way some people preach grace today makes it seem as if obedience no longer mattered. Maybe it doesn't matter to some preachers, but it matters to God.

How common it is today to "relax" God's moral, ethical and relational standards. No matter what the culture says, sex outside of marriage is sin. Coveting, lying and stealing are also sinful. Bitterness, unforgiveness and hatred are common, but wrong.

Speaking about the law, Jesus said we should not think that He came to "abolish the Law or the Prophets." Rather, He came to "fulfill" the Law. He then said, "Until heaven and earth pass away, not one dot or one mark will pass from the law until all be fulfilled" (Matt. 5:17-18).

Jesus was the embodiment of grace, but He was not anti-law. In fact, He gave a serious warning to those who would like to "relax" the demands of the law. "Whoever, therefore, breaks one of the least of these commandments and teaches others to do likewise shall be called the least in the kingdom of heaven. But whoever does and teaches them shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven" (Matt. 5:19).

Often when I hear a radio or TV preacher, it seems they are teaching people to relax God's commands. I guess that means our generation has produced some of the least in the kingdom.

The gospel tells us that no matter how sinful and disobedient we are, God still loves and redeems us by grace through faith. Our obedience does not increase God's love for us, and our

disobedience does not decrease His love for us. While we were sinners, He loved us enough to sacrifice His one and only Son for us.

If God loves us whether or not we obey, what then is the point of trying to obey His law?

Our obedience does not increase His love for us, but it does increase our love for Him.

The more we obey, the more our love for Him will grow. Jesus said it like this, "If a man loves Me, he will keep My word" (John 14:23). He did not say, If anyone keeps my Word, the Father will love him. No, the Father loves us if we keep the Word and if we do not keep the Word. Reading and obeying God's Word, increases our love for Him.

Summary: We cannot increase God's love for us, but if we want our love for God to increase, we must read and obey His Word.
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