

Why Loving God's Laws Isn't Legalism

"Oh, how I love Your law," writes the psalmist, "It is my meditation all the day" (Ps. 119:97).

Four times he writes about loving the law of God. What a foreign concept that is to a culture that delights in lawlessness and considers anything that might be restrictive as legalism.

The psalmist knew why he loved the law of God and clearly articulated his reasons for loving it.

Here are 8 reasons why David loved the law

1. He said the law of God makes him wiser than his enemies who are always around him (119:98).
2. He has more understanding than his educators because he regularly meditates on the Word of God (119:99).
3. He even understands more than the older men, the elders of the community, because he diligently seeks to obey the principles and precepts of the law of God (119:100).
4. The words of God are sweet to his taste, like honey to his taste buds (119:103).
5. The law of God has restrained his feet from going down the wrong path to evil; have aided him in not departing from good judgment; and have taught him to hate things that may seem good and fun, but are deceptively wicked and destructive (119:101, 102, 104).
6. Love for the law of God has taught the psalmist to hate being double-minded. There is no duplicity in his heart and mind. He consistently seeks after God and the way of the

righteous (119:113-120).

7. Persecution comes against him, but he stands unmovable because his heart is in awe of the Word of God and his spirit rejoices in the truth of God's law as one who has found a mine full of gold. Because he loves the law of God, lying and deception are abhorrent to him (119:161-163).

8. Love for the law of God maintains a life of stability and security because his mind and emotions are garrisoned with peace.

It would seem the psalmist has found a dream life and indeed he has found it. It is the life God has promised to everyone who will love Him with all their heart, soul, mind and strength; who will run after His law and keep His commandments. *"Now it will be, if you will diligently obey the voice of the Lord your God, being careful to do all His commandments which I am commanding you today, then the Lord your God will set you high above all the nations of the earth. And all these blessings will come on you and overtake you if you listen to the voice of the Lord your God"* (Deut. 28:1-2).

Literally, the promised blessings of God will run after you, tackle you and come upon you, if you will diligently *"obey the voice of the Lord"* and *"carefully observe all His commandments."* Twelve more verses list all of the blessings that will come into the life of someone who will love the law of the Lord.

I hear some well-meaning brothers and sisters say, "All of that is Old Testament. We live in the New Testament and we don't have to keep the law anymore."

May I share with you the words of our Lord Jesus Christ? *"If you love Me, keep My commandments. I will pray the Father, and He will give you another Counselor, that He may be with you forever: the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive,*

for it does not see Him, neither does it know Him. But you know Him, for He lives with you, and will be in you. I will not leave you fatherless. I will come to you” (John 14:15-18).

“If you love Me,” Jesus said. “If you love Me, then love my commandments, love My law.” He clearly juxtaposed those words with the promise of living a Spirit-filled life; in other words, a New Testament life.

The apostle John wrote about loving the Lord and loving the law of God in his first epistle. “By this we know that we know Him, if we keep His commandments. Whoever says, ‘I know Him,’ and does not keep His commandments is a liar, and the truth is not in him. But whoever keeps His word truly has the love of God perfected in him. By this we know we are in Him. Whoever says he remains in Him ought to walk as He walked. Brothers, I am writing no new commandment to you, but an old commandment which you have had from the beginning. The old commandment is the word which you have heard from the beginning” (1 John 2:3-7).

The accusation is often made, “That is just legalism.” Most often the accuser does not understand the distinct difference between legalism and loving the law of God. Legalism is an individual or religious group who are seeking to be righteous by keeping a list of rules or by keeping the Ten Commandments.

The disciple of Jesus Christ, who loves the law of God, is one who has been born again by faith through grace. He has been made the righteousness of God through that work of grace by faith in the redemptive blood of Jesus Christ and the regenerating power of the Holy Spirit.

Their great love for Jesus Christ stirs in their heart a deep love for His Word and a passion to govern their life and discipline their behavior in obedience to His law.

This is not done in an effort to make themselves righteous but

to avoid tarnishing the righteousness Jesus Christ has declared them to be through His divine fiat.

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