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GOD'S LAWS TRANSCEND CHANGING CIRCUMSTANCES

There is a huge difference between the laws of God and human laws. Most people have never understood that difference. And so most people tend to view God's laws in the same way that they view the human laws of the society in which they happen to live. In many cases this perspective may not be a problem.

But there will inevitably also be other occasions when the attempt to apply God's laws in the same way that we apply human laws will be a serious mistake. Those occasions will expose a major lack of understanding regarding the laws of God.

Lawyers epitomize the problems inherent in human laws. Lawyers argue about laws and how those laws should be applied. One lawyer asserts that a certain law requires that "action X" should be taken, while another lawyer asserts that the law in question does not justify that "action X" should be taken. Lawyers can look at the exact same law and then reach completely different conclusions. That is exemplified all the way up to our Supreme Court Justices, where 5-to-4 or 6-to-3 or 7-to-2 decisions are reached fairly commonly, not to mention how often lower court decisions are reversed by a higher court. Most of the time those 9 judges on the Supreme Court can't reach unanimous conclusions, even though they are all supposedly looking at the same laws.

That is not good.

At the heart of situations like this, with supposedly trained lawyers reaching completely different interpretations for the exact same laws, lies the difference between God's laws and human laws. So let's take a closer look at that difference.

THE PREMISE FOR HUMAN LAWS

Human laws are established as they are perceived to be needed. The purpose for human laws is to regulate human conduct and human actions in such a way that people will not engage in actions that are deemed to be unacceptable. But there is nothing that ties all human laws together, under one umbrella as it were.

So people live together in a society, and something happens that is unacceptable or plain bad. Then people make a law to try to prevent those "unacceptable things" from happening again. Then something completely different happens, which is also deemed to be bad. So people then make another law, to prevent this new "unacceptable situation" from happening again, or at least to present a deterrent for anyone to also engage in this unacceptable conduct. And then another situation leads to another new law.

This is an endless process.

Whenever a new "bad situation" comes about because of something somebody did or didn't do, then people propose "a new law" to deal with that new "bad situation". Somebody does something wrong with serious negative consequences ... and we (supposedly) need a new law to prevent that from happening

again. This has resulted in the following situation for us here in the United States:

- We have **20,000 laws** just governing the use and ownership of guns. That's twenty thousand different laws for one small area of life. That is an absurd situation!
- The number of pages for all of the laws just relating to the subject of taxation exceeds **80,000 pages**.
- From 2000-2007 Congress created at least **452 new crimes**, things that were not deemed to be crimes before 2000.
- There are in total more than **4,450 different Federal crimes**.
- **Nobody knows** exactly how many laws we have in total, though it is far in excess of 100,000, and very likely far in excess of 200,000. Compared to the 31,175 verses in the whole Bible, we have far more than four times as many laws as there are verses in the Bible.

That is a staggering number of laws. Can you imagine how long the Bible would have to be, if God had as many laws as we have?

When people are elected to the U.S. House of Representatives, then **creating new laws** becomes their most important job. That's why in the eight-year period from 2000-2007 Congress established 452 new crimes, to prove they are good lawmakers ... and that process of creating new crimes has continued unabated since then. Elected members are constantly looking for excuses to create new laws, all in an attempt to justify their status as members of Congress. The new laws they author or sponsor become a status symbol on their CV's.

Theoretically, all of our 100,000+ laws are based on the Constitution. But that is certainly not the case. In fact, many of our "lawmakers" either don't understand the Constitution correctly, or they reject the Constitution and actively seek to undermine it. That is just a fact!

Clearly, this endless process of creating new laws is totally out of control!

When we consider all of our laws in their totality, then the most striking feature is that there is nothing that all those laws have in common. There is no inherent quality or guiding principle that ties them all together.

There is **no relationship between laws** that regulate taxation, and laws that regulate the ownership of guns, and laws that regulate employment, and laws that regulate food production, and laws that regulate health services, and laws that regulate business practices, and laws that regulate aviation, and laws designed to regulate the environment, and all of our seemingly endless other laws.

In practice, the majority of our 100,000+ laws have nothing to do with the Constitution. The premise for creating new laws seems to be: **we need more laws** to make life better and safer and fairer. We think that laws are supposed to solve problems. But in actual fact **laws have never solved any problems**. And so Congress just continues creating more and more new laws. It is an endless futile process, like a dog chasing its own tail.

Let's just assume, for argument's sake, that all our laws are built on the foundation of our Constitution. Even if that was the case, which it is not, we would still have problems with those laws.

To see where the problems come into the picture, let's consider how the process is supposed to work.

THE CO-EQUAL BRANCHES OF GOVERNMENT

Here in the U.S. we have three supposedly co-equal branches of government:

- 1) The **Legislative Branch** (Congress) **makes** new laws and repeals or modifies existing laws.
- 2) The **Judicial Branch** (the Courts) **interprets** the laws regarding how they should be applied.
- 3) The **Executive Branch** (the President) **enforces** the laws made by Congress.

Right here we have a major source for our problems.

The people who think up and propose new laws (i.e. Congress) obviously have something in mind, which they hope their new laws will achieve. So with their specific goals in mind they then sit down and figure out the wording for their new laws. The words they use express the thoughts in the minds of those lawmakers, at least theoretically (in practice most of our laws are actually written by unelected staffers who work for those "lawgivers").

Having put their laws into words (and getting them passed into law), those laws are then taken out of their hands. Then those laws become the responsibility of the Judicial Branch. Now when a lawsuit involving one of those laws comes before the Courts, then the Courts don't go back to the original lawmakers and say: what did you mean with this particular sentence or paragraph in the law you created?

Oh no!

The Courts then decide how that law should be interpreted. And the Courts don't care whether their interpretation agrees with the original intent for that law or not. There is no recourse for the original lawgivers to ever say to the Courts:

"Listen, that's not how we meant for you to interpret our law. What we had in mind was this and this, and you are misinterpreting our law. Your interpretation in fact contradicts our original intentions."

The Courts rely on the literal and specific wording of the law, and the original intentions underlying a specific law very seldom have any influence on how the Courts will interpret and apply that law. It is the exception and not the rule when the Courts correctly apply the original intentions of the lawgivers who created that law in the first place.

The precise wording of the law becomes the most important deciding factor.

The key approach here is: "**the law says ...**". It is the precise wording of the law that lawyers debate, and about which they argue. And they don't care what **the intentions** for creating that law actually were. It is the meaning they are able to attach to the precise wording of the law that is the most important criterion.

So **there is a disconnect** between the people who create laws to deal with very specific situations they have in mind, and the people who choose to interpret the application of those laws with a complete disregard for the intentions that motivated the lawgivers to create those laws. In other words: the people who create laws do not have the power to decide how those laws will be applied.

That is a huge problem!

The Courts have the power to apply laws to circumstances and situations, to which the original lawgivers never intended their laws to be applied. The lawgivers are in fact powerless to prevent their laws from being applied to circumstances they had no intention of including in their laws.

[Comment: They do have the power to repeal or to change a law, but that is a tricky and convoluted process, and in most cases difficult to achieve. This process is also very lengthy and time-consuming. For example, consider the attempts to repeal or to reverse Obamacare, or attempts to reform welfare legislation.]

The main point to grasp here is that the Courts frequently apply laws in ways that are in conflict with the intentions of the original lawgivers. **The literal wording of a law has become the supreme criterion** for how that law will be interpreted by the Courts. And because no lawgivers are able to anticipate all possible situations and circumstances that may arise in the future, therefore when new circumstances do arise, it is easy for laws to be used in ways that are in conflict with the original intentions for those laws.

That is bad!

CONSIDER A BIBLICAL EXAMPLE

The 120 princes (political leaders) in the Persian Empire wanted to have Daniel killed. So they tricked King Darius into signing a flattering decree ... that nobody in the whole empire would be able to ask "a petition of any God or man for thirty days", except of King Darius himself.

Darius succumbed to this flattery and signed the decree, which according to the law of the Medes and Persians could not be changed or reversed (see Daniel 6:6-9). The 120 leaders knew that Daniel would pray to God every day. So they caught Daniel praying. And then they pressured Darius to have Daniel thrown into the den of lions.

When Darius realized that he had been tricked, he "**was sore displeased with himself**, and set his heart on Daniel to deliver him" (Daniel 6:14). Here was the supreme ruler of the greatest empire at that point in time, and **he was powerless** to do what he wanted to do. He was powerless because "no decree nor statute which the king establishes may be changed" (Daniel 6:15).

There was **no flexibility** of any kind. The one who had signed the law had no control over how that law might be applied by other individuals, and he couldn't even issue a royal pardon. When Darius signed that law, he had no intention of preventing Daniel from praying every day ... Daniel's situation didn't cross the mind of Darius when he signed that flattering but perverse decree.

We all know this story.

The bottom line in this story is: here was a law that was applied to a situation to which the actual lawgiver had no intention of applying it. In fact, the lawgiver himself strongly opposed the circumstances to which his law was applied. In this case the problem was that the people who provided the wording for this law (the 120 princes) had very devious intentions for applying this law, **intentions they kept well hidden** from the actual lawgiver (Darius) until it was too late to avoid the implementation of those devious intentions.

This is a very common and familiar process in our present age, one of deviously securing the passage of laws that would never be approved if the hidden implications of those laws were openly exposed to the voting population. That's the "let's pass this law so we can then find out

what's in it" methodology.

The point is this:

If the actual literal wording of a law becomes the overriding criterion for how that law must be applied, then this will **inevitably** create undesirable results in some future situations and circumstances.

With human laws: the actual wording of a law becomes the final judge of what is right or wrong. And the intentions underlying the creation of that law take a distant second place to how the actual wording of that law can be interpreted. **The wording always takes priority over the actual intentions.**

That's how human laws always operate. And that's how the law Darius had signed operated. And the law he had signed turned out to be a huge problem for Darius himself, because under no circumstances did Darius desire to see Daniel killed.

Let's look at another supreme national ruler.

THE EXAMPLE OF KING SOLOMON

Solomon was about 14 years old when he succeeded his father David as king over Israel. Some of his half-brothers, who were all older than Solomon, had also hoped to succeed David.

One of them, Adonijah, started **plotting to overthrow Solomon**. Basically, Adonijah plotted to have Joab, the leader of the army on his side, and also to have Abiathar, one of the two top priests, on his side. So the plot for removing Solomon from being king was for Adonijah to have the backing of the military (i.e. Joab) and also the backing of the religious leadership (i.e. Abiathar). But the last key component in that plot to take over the kingship from Solomon was to also have King David's last wife or concubine (i.e. Abishag the Shunammite) become Adonijah's wife.

This may not make sense from our perspective today. But Adonijah's attempt to get Abishag to become his wife was aimed at **consolidating Adonijah's claim to the throne** over his younger half-brother Solomon. Adonijah knew that the people of Israel would also see it that way. In cases where the succession was not from father to son, it was a common practice for a successor to take over some of the wives of the previous ruler. As God told David through the Prophet Nathan, after David had committed adultery with Bathsheba:

And I gave you your master's house, **and your master's wives into your bosom**, and gave you the house of Israel and of Judah; and if *that had been* too little, I would moreover have given unto you such and such things. (2 Samuel 12:8)

God had given David some of Saul's wives when David became king. And that action (David taking over some of Saul's wives) also consolidated David's position as king in the eyes of the people of Israel, because that's what kings used to do.

Adonijah's request for Abishag was with that precise motivation, to strengthen his claim to the throne. Bathsheba was very naive and did not understand Adonijah's real motivation.

(Comment: Normally a son would not take over one of his father's wives or concubines. But it was known that David had not had sex with Abishag, who was a young woman and still a virgin. So for Adonijah to have Abishag would not have been a case of a father and son having sex with the same

woman. Adonijah could not have asked for any of his father David's other concubines, because David had had sex with all of them in his earlier years. Abishag was really Adonijah's only option for this part of his plot.)

So Adonijah deviously persuaded Solomon's mother to ask Solomon that Abishag might be given to Adonijah. Adonijah had figured that Solomon would be caught off-guard and not deny his own mother any request ("for he will not refuse you", see 1 Kings 2:17). And sure enough, Solomon's mother was totally deceived by Adonijah's real intentions, and so she naively approached her son with this request.

Now notice the point that concerns us in our context.

Bathsheba said to Solomon: "I desire one small petition of you; *I pray you*, say me not nay" (1 Kings 2:20). Notice the reply King Solomon gave his mother:

"And the king said unto her, Ask on, my mother: **for I will not say you nay**".

Here the king gives his word to his mother that he will not deny her request. Solomon made this commitment to his mother in the presence of other people. So there was no way to later deny the promise he had made to his mother.

Now both Darius and Solomon were tricked.

Darius was tricked into signing a stupid law, proposed by people who had devious intentions. And Solomon was tricked by Adonijah into committing himself to fulfill his (Solomon's) mother's request, without knowing in advance what that request would be. Both these kings made these commitments in good faith, unaware of the perverse ramifications that these commitments would have (i.e. with Darius that Daniel would be killed, and with Solomon that Solomon himself would be overthrown).

Let's continue with Solomon.

Having made this totally unconditional commitment to his mother, what did Solomon do once he found out what her request was? Did he say: well, I have already given my word that I would fulfill her request (think also of Herod being asked for the head of John the Baptist), so I guess that's what I have to do?

Is that what Solomon did? No, of course not! Solomon had wisdom!

Solomon was already aware of Adonijah's plotting with the military (i.e. with Joab) and with the priesthood (i.e. with Abiathar). And Solomon immediately understood the real reason why Adonijah needed to have Abishag as a wife, namely, to consolidate his claim to the throne.

So instead of keeping his promise to his mother, **Solomon immediately had both Adonijah and Joab put to death**; and **Abiathar**, who was also "**worthy of death**" (see 1 Kings 2:26) for plotting to overthrow the king, was banished from Jerusalem. Plotting to overthrow the God-selected king reaps the death penalty.

Human lawyers would argue that Solomon obviously broke his word, and therefore they would pronounce him guilty in this matter. And that is in fact the way some commentators reason erroneously ... that this incident made Solomon a murderer. But that is not true!

Solomon himself felt no obligation of any kind to keep his promise to his mother. Breaking his word in these specific circumstances didn't bother him one bit.

Now here is the lesson for us:

With human laws (or promises made) the literal wording always takes priority over the actual intentions underlying the wording of a law (or a promise).

With **the godly approach** the underlying intentions always take priority over the actual words that are used. With the godly approach people can never be tricked into making unintended commitments because of the way something is deviously worded.

So coming back to Solomon:

The underlying intentions in Solomon's promise to his mother were to not deny her anything that was good, honest, just, pure, sincere and right. Under no circumstances was Solomon at that point in his life prepared to grant his mother any request that was bad, evil, unjust, hypocritical and plain wrong.

Solomon didn't spell it out to his mother, but **that was implied**. He didn't say: "**if you ask** for anything that is good and right and just then I will certainly do that; **but if you ask** for anything that is evil and unjust and wrong then I will certainly **not** fulfill your request".

But this was the obvious premise on which Solomon made his promise to his mother.

That's also how God does it!

When Jesus Christ said: "**you shall ask what you will**, and it shall be done unto you" (John 15:7), and when He said: "**whatsoever you shall ask** the Father in My name, He will give it to you" (John 16:23), this was on **the obviously implied premise**, that the things we ask for are good and honest and just and sincere, etc.

These promises in John 15 and 16, while carte blanche in their literal wording, obviously don't apply to asking for things that are evil, bad and wrong. And we all understand that.

The underlying intentions with all of these promises Jesus Christ presented in these Scriptures always take priority over the actual wording of those promises.

Underlying premises are not always spelled out, and they don't need to always be spelled out!

But with all of God's laws and God's promises the underlying premises always take priority over the actual words that are used. Here is why:

Words can be twisted and misapplied; they can be used in ways they were not intended to be used. **Underlying premises**, on the other hand, are not subject to change and they **can't be twisted** to achieve undesirable consequences.

Think about that!

Consider the Sabbath commandment as an example.

THE SABBATH COMMANDMENT

A part of the Sabbath commandment reads: "... **in it you shall not do any work** ..." (Exodus 20:10).

The typical human lawyer then reasons: we need to define what we mean by "work". And once we have defined what constitutes "work", then we can establish what is permitted on the Sabbath, and what is not permitted on the Sabbath.

That's how human laws function!

And that approach is dead wrong! That approach doesn't ask about God's intentions for this commandment. In fact, that approach doesn't even care what are God's intentions for the Sabbath. The only thing that carnal human approach asks is: how must we define "work"?

That carnal human approach to this law of God was exemplified by the hypocritical Pharisees. And so their hypocritical approach was to judge acts of healing people on the Sabbath as "work", and therefore as supposedly breaking the commandment. Likewise, their hypocritical approach was to judge picking a few random ears of wheat on the Sabbath, and then eating the grains, as "work", and therefore also supposedly breaking the Sabbath.

But God's laws are not defined by words!

All of God's laws are defined by **two great principles**: to love God above all else, and to love everyone else as we love ourselves. The wording we have in the Bible for every single law of God is intended to express applications of one or both of those two great principles.

The words of a law of God don't define the law. **The words are only the tools** to try to convey certain specific applications of a way of thinking that always puts love for God and love for fellow-man ahead of self-interest. And with every law God's actual intentions for that law immensely exceed the limits presented by the actual wording of that law.

With God's laws the two great principles are everything! And if the wording of any law of God can ever be construed to go against one of these two principles, then we are clearly applying the wording of that law in a way that is contrary to God's intentions for that law. And **in that situation** the wording of the law must yield to God's original intentions for that law.

That's what the whole sermon on the mount (Matthew 5-7) was all about. Every example Christ presented in that situation shows that a law's application far exceeds the limits set in the actual wording of a law.

Let's come back to the Sabbath Commandment.

Jesus Christ was the One who spoke those words from Mount Sinai in the days of Moses. That's why He is "Lord of the Sabbath" (Mark 2:28). And during His earthly ministry He knew exactly what is right for the Sabbath and what is not right for the Sabbath. And Jesus Christ did not ever attempt to provide some kind of definition for "work". How you define "work" is secondary to "what are God's intentions for the Sabbath"?

Notice what Jesus Christ said to the Pharisees who were critical when Jesus Christ healed people on the Sabbath.

And He saith unto them, **Is it lawful to do good on the sabbath days, or to do evil? to save life, or to kill?** But they held their peace. (Mark 3:4)

Christ directed this question to the Pharisees. But the Pharisees didn't answer this question, and neither did Jesus Christ Himself provide an answer. So let us now answer these very easy questions.

A) It is **ALWAYS**, including on the Sabbath days, **lawful to do good!**

B) It is **NEVER**, on any day of the week, **lawful to do evil!**

C) It is **ALWAYS**, including on the Sabbath days, **lawful to save life!**

D) It is **NEVER**, on any day of the week, **lawful to kill!**

Now ask yourself: why did Jesus Christ ask this question? What was His point?

The point of these questions is that **the word "work" does not define God's intentions for the Sabbath!** Whether or not "doing good" constitutes work doesn't enter the picture. Likewise, whether or not "saving life" constitutes work also does not enter the picture.

This is where God's laws are totally different from human laws. If the Sabbath Commandment was only a human law, then lawyers would most assuredly argue about whether or not something is "work". But from the point of view of Jesus Christ, the One who established the Sabbath Commandment, there is a far greater focus than whether or not something constitutes work. There are motivations that supercede the question of work.

For example:

Reaping your crop on the Sabbath is work and it is an unacceptable activity for the Sabbath. But going out into your garden on the Sabbath and picking a tomato or an apple, etc. for immediate consumption is perfectly acceptable. For that matter, if there are 6 or 8 people in your family, it is quite acceptable to pick a dozen pieces of fruit for snacks or as a part of the morning meal. This sort of activity is simply not what God means by "work". The motivation for picking a few pieces of fruit in this situation is completely different from the motivation of someone who picks the same number of pieces of fruit for the purpose of then selling them the next day at some Organic Farmers Sunday Market.

In these situations the motivation and the intentions are everything! But try to argue that in a human court of law, where they consider nothing other than the literal wording of the law.

Consider also God's instructions for the Sabbath in Isaiah 58:13-14.

If you turn away your foot from the sabbath, *from* doing your pleasure on my holy day; and call the sabbath a delight, the holy of the LORD, honorable; and shalt honor him, not doing your own ways, nor finding your own pleasure, nor speaking *your own* words ... (Isaiah 58:13-14)

In these instructions God simply does not mention the word "work". Certainly, we are not to work on the Sabbath. But the things God focused on here in Isaiah 58:13 don't appear anywhere in the commandment in Exodus 20:8-11. And with human laws it would be difficult to argue from Exodus 20:8-11 with the intention of arriving at Isaiah 58:13.

We have always referred to these expanded applications for God's laws as "**the spirit of the law**", and you have known about "the spirit of the law" for a long time. The expression "the spirit of the law" tells us that the literal wording of a law of God can never adequately express all of the actual intentions for that law.

Jesus Christ repeatedly illustrated this in the sermon on the mount.

For example, the wording of the law that says "you shall not kill" cannot properly cover God's actual intentions here. God's intentions here are that we must not entertain the emotion of anger and rage (see Matthew 5:21-22).

Similarly, with the law "you shall not commit adultery" God's intentions are that wrong thoughts of lusting are also a violation of this law (see Matthew 5:27-28).

In other words:

With all of God's laws the literal wording of the law is nothing more than the starting point of a journey into understanding the mind of God.

Every law of God goes beyond those starting points. It is always a case of "these (starting points) ought you to have done" (a la Matthew 23:23), but you always have to go much further than that. And in that process we need to take the application of God's laws back towards the two great principles.

No human laws function like that. This is not how the natural human mind thinks. The human mind likes to set parameters within which it is safe to operate, whereas **the law of God is limitless** and covers every possible situation throughout the entire universe.

Earlier I said: "Human laws are established as they are perceived to be needed." By contrast, **God's laws were established before they were needed!** That is because all of God's laws together are nothing other than an amplification of the two great principles. God the Father and Jesus Christ have always existed, and these two principles are nothing other than a manifestation of Their inherent natures. These two principles express what the mind of God is like. And because God the Father and Jesus Christ have identical minds, therefore They always reach identical decisions and conclusions. So They didn't need any laws to regulate conduct between Themselves.

When new circumstances come about, then God the Father and Jesus Christ have the identical responses to those new circumstances. And They don't need new laws to deal with those new circumstances.

However, other beings with free independent minds (i.e. angels and human beings) don't inherently have the same mind that God the Father has. And therefore God then formulated certain laws, to lead these created beings with independent minds to the point where their free minds will then also always reach the same decisions and assessments that the mind of God reaches for any possible future situation.

The righteous angels of God have already completed this training. And we human beings are still in the process of dealing with God's ways of training our minds. God's plan of salvation involves testing and training free independent human minds to willingly and voluntarily adopt God's way of thinking. When that is achieved, then the human minds will work in the way that is identical to the way God's mind works.

Obedience to all of God's laws is one major tool in this training process, because God's laws are an expression of God's mind. But human minds can only be trained if they are forced to make decisions. Telling human minds "here's what you can do, and here is what you cannot do" has zero training effect. This approach can condition, but it cannot train the mind to correctly deal with new conditions in the future.

THE CHRISTIAN LIFE IS ONE OF MAKING DECISIONS

With **human laws**, the laws **decide for you** what you can or cannot do. And when new circumstances come about (e.g. the internet is invented), then new laws must be created to deal with those new circumstances (e.g. how to deal with internet crimes).

By contrast, **God's laws force us to constantly make our own decisions** by evaluating for ourselves all circumstances against the two great principles of God's law. And any and all new circumstances that arise are already covered by the existing law of God. And so with God no new laws are ever needed. Thus the invention of the internet, and all other new circumstances, are already covered by the two principles.

What is needed when new circumstances arise is **learning to correctly apply** the two great principles to those new circumstances.

[Comment: As an aside, can you see how devastating it is to the development of godly character for ministers to constantly make decisions for the church members? Ministers who take that approach view God's laws as if they were the same as human laws. It is human laws that decide what we can and cannot do. And people who have the ministers make all their major decisions never learn to correctly apply God's laws for themselves, which means that they don't develop godly character. They never grasp the importance of learning to correctly apply the principles of God's laws themselves. They make no progress towards becoming one with God. "Yes-men" are never one with anybody!]

We must learn to adapt the existing laws of God so that those existing laws can be correctly applied to those new circumstances. We must apply the principles of the existing laws of God to those new circumstances.

For all future eternity **there will be only two laws** that will govern the entire Family of God and the entire creation. The first law is that we must love God above all else; and the second law is that we love every other individual as we love ourselves (see Matthew 22:37-40).

Now throughout future eternity many, many new circumstances will arise, because God will never stop creating. And whatever those new circumstances may turn out to be, **those two laws will be adapted to apply to those new circumstances**. No new laws will ever be needed.

Rather, adapting those two laws to new circumstances will require all of us to constantly make decisions. And that is why it is so important that we all become "one" with one another, and especially "one" with God the Father and with Jesus Christ (see John 17:11, 22-23). If we are not "one" with God at that point in time, then we would assuredly make wrong decisions in those new circumstances. And "wrong decisions" would result in sins.

Laws are for those who are not "one with God". And so laws are required in this present age, because humanity is assuredly not "one with God". And the further away from being "one with God" a people are, the more laws they need, to set clear bounds for what they may do. The additional laws those people will need will be aimed at putting the two great principles into practice in new or changed circumstances for minds that don't think like God.

The future eternity that God has planned for His Family is not possible if any member of the Family of God is not "one with God" in exactly the same way that God the Father and Jesus Christ are "one" right now.

And the glory which You gave to Me I have given them; **that they may be one, even as we are one:**

(John 17:22)

Achieving this oneness is an absolute requirement for achieving God's intention for the Family of God. Now think about the following point:

If God ever at any point in future eternity has to make some "new laws" for His Family, then it will be impossible to ever achieve oneness in the Family of God.

Any necessity for new laws would imply that someone in the Family of God might say, do or think something wrong, unless that new law is established. And if there is even the possibility that someone in the Family of God might say, do or think something wrong (e.g. like Satan had done at some point before the creation of man), then oneness is not possible. But those who are "born of God ... cannot sin" (see 1 John 3:9), because they will be truly "one with God".

Let's conclude by spelling out the difference between the laws of God and the laws of men.

THE DIFFERENCES BETWEEN GOD'S LAWS AND MAN'S LAWS

With the laws of man, the literal wording of the law is the most important thing. The criterion is always "here is what the law says ...". It is **the letter of the law** that is most important. The underlying intentions for the establishment of that law may or may not be taken into consideration when a judgment is reached. And different lawyers looking at the same laws frequently reach different conclusions.

The laws of man do not concern themselves with how people think, with how people's minds work. And with man's laws there is always a need for new laws whenever new circumstances come about. New circumstances are not covered by existing laws. And so the establishment of man's laws is an endless process.

In contrast, the laws of God are directed first and foremost at how we think, how we use our minds. It is the mind that has to love God above all else, and then love everyone else equal to love for self.

With God's laws it is always **the spirit of the law**, the underlying intention for that law, that is most important. And in any disagreement between the letter of the law and the spirit of the law, it is always the spirit of the law that takes priority over the letter of the law. Without going into details here, some examples of this priority are: when David and his men ate the showbread which was intended for the priests, when Jesus Christ healed people on the Sabbath, and when the hungry disciples picked some ears of wheat on the Sabbath for immediate consumption.

As the Apostle Paul explained:

(God) who also has made us able ministers of the new testament; not of the letter, but of the spirit: for **the letter kills, but the spirit gives life.** (2 Corinthians 3:6)

We are "ministers of the spirit" because we are supposed to always apply the spirit of the law, God's underlying intentions for a law, to every situation.

And so God's laws require us to constantly make decisions, based on the way of thinking employed by our minds. With God's laws decisions are never made for us. And when new circumstances come about, then God does not establish new laws. Instead, the two great principles are adapted to apply to those new circumstances, requiring more decisions on our part.

So when seeking to apply God's laws in our lives today, we shouldn't be looking for do's and don't's. We should instead be seeking to apply those two great principles, and in their expanded form of the ten commandments, to every aspect of our lives.

And we must never forget that with God's laws the underlying intentions are always more important than the literal wording of the law. As Jesus Christ showed in the sermon on the mount, for God's laws the literal wording is always only the starting point for the application of those laws. They always cover far more ground than is expressed by the wording of the laws.

This subject is also thoroughly discussed in my 62-page article "Understanding the Mind of Christ", which explains Matthew 22:37-40 in great detail.

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