

Pine Knoll Sabbath School Study Notes
First Quarter 2025: *God's Love and Justice*
Lesson 13 "*Love Is the Fulfillment of the Law*"

Read for this week's study

Exodus 20:1–17; Romans 6:1–3; Romans 7:7–12; Jeremiah 31:31–34; Matthew 23:23, 24; James 2:1–9

Memory Text

"Owe no one anything except to love one another, for he who loves another has fulfilled the law" (Romans 13:8, NKJV).

Lesson Outline from Adult Sabbath School Study Guide

- I. Introduction
- II. The Law of Love
- III. The Law Is Holy and Righteous and Good
- IV. Law and Grace
- V. Love Is the Fulfillment of the Law
- VI. Above All, Love One Another
- VII. Further Study

Questions and Notes for Consideration

Facilitator: Daniel Duda

1. "If love is indeed the fulfillment of the law, then we should be careful not to think of law in a way that is separate from love or to think of love in a way that is disconnected from law. In Scripture, love and law go together. [...] God's law is not a set of abstract principles but commands and instructions intended for our flourishing. God's law is, in part, an expression of love as God Himself expresses it." (Sabbath afternoon)
2. If it is true that God desires that everyone loves him, and love is the greatest commandment (Matthew 22:38), why is it that some people do not love God? What does it tell us about God and universe that even God cannot causally determine that everybody loves him? God desires genuine love relationship with his creatures, which requires he consistently grants them free will. Love, by nature must be freely given, freely received, and freely maintained.
3. God's law does not consist of abstract principles; instead, God's law is an expression of relationship. How can the context of the covenant relationship be seen explicitly in the Ten Commandments (Exodus 20:1–17)? (Sunday's lesson)

4. If “the law is holy, and the commandment holy and just and good” (Romans 7:12, NKJV), how is the law further confirmed, rather than invalidated, by the process of redemption? (Monday’s lesson)
5. Jesus emphasized that “until heaven and earth disappear, not the smallest letter, not the least stroke of a pen, will by any means disappear from the Law until everything is accomplished” (Matthew 5:18, NIV). So what is going to happen when “heaven and earth pass away”?
6. Where does the sharp distinction of law and grace being diametrically opposed to one another come from? (Tuesday’s lesson)
7. “While the ‘gods’ of the surrounding nations were fickle and entirely unpredictable, leaving people without a way to know what the ‘gods’ desired and what would please them, the God of the Bible very clearly instructs His people about what pleases Him.” (Tuesday’s lesson) Why is it important to “please” God? Why is it significant that what pleases God is for the ultimate good of all His people, individually and collectively?
8. What does Jeremiah 31:31–34 teach about God’s promises to give us a new heart? How is that part of the biblical storyline (cf. John 3:1-21)?
9. In what sense is love the fulfillment of the law (Romans 13:8)? (Wednesday’s lesson) What are the “weightier matters of the law” in Matthew 23:23, 24 (cf. Deuteronomy 5:12–15 and Isaiah 58:13,14)? How can we model “justice and mercy and faith” in 21st century society?
10. Jesus commands His followers to “‘love one another;” even as “‘I have loved you’.” Jesus also proclaims: “‘By this all will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another”” (John 13:34,35, NKJV). How can we live this in a tangible way both individually and collectively in our time and culture? How can we model wanting good for the other person and immersing people into Trinitarian reality (Matthew 28:19)?
11. How can we put into practice what we have studied about God’s love and justice for the last 13 weeks?

Thoughts from Graham Maxwell

As you know, this idea that “love is the fulfilling of the law” was certainly not new with Paul. Jesus had said the same thing to the inquiring lawyer. But the first one to say it was Moses. Jesus and Paul quoted the man who was instrumental in giving the commandments in the first place. Look at Deuteronomy 6:5: “Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength.” (NIV) That is one half of it. Then look in Leviticus 19:17, 18: “Do not hate your brother in your heart. . . . But love your neighbor as yourself.” (NIV) Jesus quoted that from Moses, right from the beginning. But you cannot really command things like love, and “not hating your brother in your heart,” can you? But when people are misbehaving, you may say so as an emergency measure. But that is all it is. It doesn’t provide the lasting motivation that God desires.

Then, since even love is not clearly understood, and think how it has been grossly perverted through the years, Paul added 1 Corinthians 13:4-6. This love that we're talking about that is the fulfilling of the law, "is patient and kind . . . love is not jealous or boastful . . . it is not arrogant or rude. Love does not insist on its own way; it is not irritable or resentful; it does not rejoice at wrong, but rejoices in the right." (RSV) Imagine living in a community where everyone lives as described in the Ten Commandments! That means everybody loves God and everybody loves everybody else, which means that no one is ever rude or arrogant, or impatient. No one insists on having his own way. Can you imagine living in such a community? Would you be free?

Then you go down to the details of the Decalogue. No one ever steals. No one ever kills. No one ever hates. No one ever lies. Everyone can be trusted. And even more than that, look at number ten. People not only never do anything wrong—no one ever **wants** to. That's the meaning of number ten, the one that bothered Paul so much at first. He thought God was interfering too much when He got in that deep. And finally, Paul said that that is what **really** guarantees our freedom. We will live in a place where people not only never do anything wrong, they will never even want to. That means they have really been healed.

And more than that, according to the first commandment, everyone loves and reveres the same God. What kind of a God do they worship and admire? Every member of God's family will admire the God who values nothing higher than the freedom of His children and who has paid such a price to prove it. They will worship a God who asks for nothing more than mutual love and trust. That produces a unity that is inherent in our faith and the fact that we all love and worship the same God. When you have a group of people who live like that, you have real freedom, real peace, and real security. Seen in that light, the Decalogue is a guarantee of freedom. For God says, "I will always run my universe this way. I'd rather die than change it." {Graham Maxwell. Excerpt from the audio series, Conversations About God, #12, "God's Law is No Threat to Our Freedom" recorded April 1984, Loma Linda, California} *To listen to the entire audio of the above reference, click on the following direct link: <http://pkp.cc/12MMCG>*

Further Study with Ellen White

God's work is the same in all time, although there are different degrees of development and different manifestations of His power, to meet the wants of men in the different ages. Beginning with the first gospel promise, and coming down through the patriarchal and Jewish ages, and even to the present time, there has been a gradual unfolding of the purposes of God in the plan of redemption. {PP 373.2}

Satan is ever at work endeavoring to pervert what God has spoken, to blind the mind and darken the understanding, and thus lead men into sin. This is why the Lord is so explicit, making His requirements so very plain that none need err. God is constantly seeking to draw men close under His protection, that Satan may not practice his cruel, deceptive power upon them. He has

condescended to speak to them with His own voice, to write with His own hand the living oracles. And these blessed words, all instinct with life and luminous with truth, are committed to men as a perfect guide. {PP 503.3}

The ten holy precepts spoken by Christ upon Sinai's mount were the revelation of the character of God, and made known to the world the fact that He had jurisdiction over the whole human heritage. That law of ten precepts of the greatest love that can be presented to man is the voice of God from heaven speaking to the soul in promise, "This do, and you will not come under the dominion and control of Satan." There is not a negative in that law, although it may appear thus. It is DO, and Live (Letter 89, 1898). {1BC 1105.2}

So far from making arbitrary requirements, God's law is given to men as a hedge, a shield. Whoever accepts its principles is preserved from evil. Fidelity to God involves fidelity to man. Thus the law guards the rights, the individuality, of every human being. It restrains the superior from oppression, and the subordinate from disobedience. It ensures man's well-being, both for this world and for the world to come. To the obedient it is the pledge of eternal life, for it expresses the principles that endure forever. {Ed 76.4}

It will take the whole of eternity for man to understand the plan of redemption. It will open to him line upon line; here a little and there a little (MS 21, 1895). {6BC 1115.15}

The religion of Jesus Christ is not merely to prepare us for the future immortal life; it is to enable us to live the Christ life here on earth. Jesus is not only our pattern, He is also our friend and our guide, and by taking hold of His strong arm and partaking of His Spirit, we may walk "even as he walked." {TMK 298.6}

The man who attempts to keep the commandments of God from a sense of obligation merely—because he is required to do so—will never enter into the joy of obedience. He does not obey. When the requirements of God are accounted a burden because they cut across human inclination, we may know that the life is not a Christian life. True obedience is the outworking of a principle within. It springs from the love of righteousness, the love of the law of God. The essence of all righteousness is loyalty to our Redeemer. This will lead us to do right because it is right—because right doing is pleasing to God. {COL 97.3}

If the human agent consents, God can and will so identify His will with all our thoughts and aims, so blend our hearts and minds into conformity to His Word, that when obeying His will, we are only carrying out the impulses of our minds. {UL 187.5}

In calling them to His service, God offers them freedom. Obedience to God is liberty from the thralldom of sin, deliverance from human passion and impulse. {TM 247.1}

The new birth consists in having new motives, new tastes, new tendencies. Those who are begotten unto a new life by the Holy Spirit, have become partakers of the divine nature, and in all their habits and practices they will give evidence of their relationship to Christ. (RH April 12, 1892). {6BC 1101.1}

The truths of God's word are not mere sentiments, but the utterances of the Most High. He who makes these truths a part of his life becomes in every sense a new creature. He is not given new mental powers, but the darkness that through ignorance and sin has clouded the understanding is removed. {CT 452.2}

The Sabbath of the fourth commandment was instituted in Eden. After God had made the world, and created man upon the earth, He made the Sabbath for man. After Adam's sin and fall nothing was taken from the law of God. The principles of the ten commandments existed before the fall, and were of a character suited to the condition of a holy order of beings. After the fall, the principles of those precepts were not changed, but additional precepts were given to meet man in his fallen state (3SG 295). {1BC 1104.3}

The law was not spoken at this time exclusively for the benefit of the Hebrews. God honored them by making them the guardians and keepers of His law, but it was to be held as a sacred trust for the whole world. The precepts of the Decalogue are adapted to all mankind, and they were given for the instruction and government of all. Ten precepts, brief, comprehensive, and authoritative, cover the duty of man to God and to his fellow man; and all based upon the great fundamental principle of love. . . . In the Ten Commandments these principles are carried out in detail, and made applicable to the condition and circumstances of man. {PP 305.2}

But in heaven, service is not rendered in the spirit of legality. When Satan rebelled against the law of Jehovah, the thought that there was a law came to the angels almost as an awakening to something unthought of. In their ministry the angels are not as servants, but as sons. There is perfect unity between them and their Creator. Obedience is to them no drudgery. Love for God makes their service a joy. So in every soul wherein Christ, the hope of glory, dwells, His words are re-echoed, "I delight to do Thy will, O My God: yea, Thy law is within My heart." Psalm 40:8. {MB 109.2}

Christ came to the world with the accumulated love of eternity. Sweeping away the exactions which had encumbered the law of God, He showed that the law is a law of love, an expression of the Divine Goodness. He showed that in obedience to its principles is involved the happiness of mankind, and with it the stability, the very foundation and framework, of human society. {Ed 76.3}

There is no caste with God. He ignores everything of the kind. All souls are of value with Him. Laboring for the salvation of the soul is employment worthy of the highest honor. It matters not what may be the form of our labor, or among what class, whether high or low. In God's sight these distinctions will not affect its true worth. The sincere, earnest, contrite soul, however ignorant, is precious in the sight of the Lord. He places His own signet upon men, judging, not by their rank, not by their wealth, not by their intellectual greatness, but by their oneness with Christ. The unlearned, the outcast, the slave, if he has made the most of his opportunities and privileges, if he has cherished the light given him of God, has done all that is required. The world may call him ignorant, but God calls him wise and good, and thus his name stands registered in the books of heaven. God will fit him up to do Him honor, not only in heaven, but on the earth.—*Gospel Workers*, p. 332. (1915) {Ev 566.1}

To love as Christ loved means to manifest unselfishness at all times and in all places, by kind words and pleasant looks. These cost those who give them nothing, but they leave behind a fragrance that surrounds the soul. Their effect can never be estimated. Not only are they a blessing to the receiver, but to the giver; for they react upon him. Genuine love is a precious attribute of heavenly origin, which increases in fragrance in proportion as it is dispensed to others. . . . {OHC 231.4}