

Bible Stories for Adults

The Purpose of God's Law

Romans 5-7

Opening

Gathering: What are ways that Christians easily fall back to trusting the law for salvation?

Today's Focus: God gave His Law not as an effective means for people to be saved, but to show them their need for the only way to be saved – faith in Jesus Christ.

Key Verses: *I will put My Law in their minds and write it on their hearts. I will be their God, and they will be My people.* Jeremiah 31:33

The Law is holy and the commandment is holy, righteous and good. Romans 7:12

Opening Prayer

Lesson

The Torah

The most common Hebrew word in the Bible for law is *torah*. Others are *dath*, *hoq*, *mitswah*, *mishpat*

The most common Greek word for law is *nomos*

In what ways are *torah* and *nomos* used in the Bible? = All use word *torah* or *nomos*

Proverbs 1:8 = Human instruction (mother's *teaching*)

Isaiah 1:10 = Divine instruction (*law* of our God)

Leviticus 7:7 = Regulations

2 Samuel 7:19 = Custom (translated as *manner* or *usual way*)

1 Kings 2:3 = Law of Moses

Luke 16:16 = First 5 books of Old Testament – Pentateuch

John 10:34 = Scriptures in general

Purpose of God's Law (*Psalms 119*)

How did the Psalm writer explain the value of God's Law? = Longest Bible chapter, Focus on God's Law

Psalm 119:97-98, 103-105 = It reveals God's wisdom of living in a right relationship with Him

How did Solomon add to this?

Proverbs 3:1-6 = God's Law shows us how God intends for us to live in His blessings

How did God first reveal this right relationship?

Genesis 2:8; 3:8a = God placed man in His presence in the Garden of Delight (Eden)

God's Law Before Moses (*Romans 2:14-15*)

What is the first law recorded in the Bible?

Genesis 2:16-17 = Don't *eat of the tree of knowledge of good and evil*

How did eating of the tree of knowledge of good and evil further reveal God's Law?

Romans 2:14-15 = He put His Law on man's heart – we call it conscience

How well did people follow the law God had put on their hearts?

Genesis 6:5-7a = They ignored it and replaced it with evil – God sent the flood

How did God begin to reveal His Law more directly after the earth began to be replenished?

Genesis 17:1, 7 = He established a covenant relationship with Abraham and his descendants

How was God's Law part of God's covenant relationship with Abraham?

Genesis 26:2-5 = Abraham obeyed & God confirmed His covenant relationship with offspring

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Extending the Covenant Relationship (*Exodus 19*)

What did God do after Abraham's offspring had grown into a nation?

Exodus 3:8a, 12 = Sent Moses to bring them deeper into His covenant relationship

Why was returning to this mountain an important part of extending God's covenant relationship to them?

Exodus 19:3-6 = Confirmed & revealed more of His covenant relationship with this holy nation

Were the people willing to receive these revelations and live under His covenant?

Exodus 19:7-8 = Yes, they were committed to being His people

How did God make it clear to these people that the revelations were His, not Moses'?

Exodus 19:9, 16, 19 = God descended and spoke with Moses so all could hear Him

Mediator of the Covenant (*Hebrews 9:11-22*)

How did the people respond to this revelation of God's presence?

Exodus 20:18-20 = They were afraid of God's power and asked Moses to mediate

How did this mediator point out the atoning purpose of God's covenant Law?

Hebrews 9:19-22 (*Exodus 24:4-8*) = Cleansed the people with blood, sealing the covenant

How was this a representation of God's eternal covenant relationship with all people?

Hebrews 9:12-15 = Jesus was mediator of God's eternal covenant through His own blood

Teach Your Children Well (*Deuteronomy 4:1-14*)

How did Moses begin to tell the Israelites how God wanted them to live as His people?

Deuteronomy 4:1-2 = Here are God's laws; Follow them and be blessed; Don't change them

How would God use these laws to reveal Himself to the world through these people?

Deuteronomy 4:5-8 = God's Laws would reveal His wisdom and His loving relationship

Were these laws only for this nation at this point of its history?

Deuteronomy 4:9 = No, they were also for the individuals and their descendants

What did the Israelites memorize and recite to remember the importance of these laws?

Deuteronomy 6:4-9 = The Great Shema (hear) – Summary & need to remember & pass it on

Types of God's Law (*Exodus*)

What three types of law did God give this new nation on Mount Sinai?

Exodus 22:1 = Civil - Needed for the holy new nation

Exodus 29:38-41 = Ceremonial - Living in the covenant relationship

Exodus 20:3-4, 7-8, 12-17 = Moral - God's standards for all people

Applying God's Laws Today (*Matthew 5:18*)

Do God's civil laws from Sinai still apply to us today?

Romans 13:1-2 = No, He institutes governments to set laws as society changes

Do God's ceremonial laws from Sinai still apply to us today?

Hebrews 10:1-4, 8-10, 19-22 = No, they were a shadow of what Jesus would do

Do God's moral laws from Sinai still apply to us today?

Matthew 5:17-18 = Yes, no one can change even the tiniest detail

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Jesus' Summary (*Matthew 22:35-40*)

How did Jesus summarize God's Moral Law?

Matthew 22:35-38 = Love the Lord your God – First Table of 10 Commandments (1-3)

Matthew 22:39-40 = Love your neighbor - Second Table of 10 Commandments (4-10)

Promises and Curses of God's Law (*Deuteronomy 6-8*)

What promises did God give to those who obey all of His Laws?

Deuteronomy 6:24-25 = Always prosper and live, Be righteous

What curses did God give to those who disobey His Laws?

Deuteronomy 8:19-20 = Be destroyed

The Cursed and The Blessed (*Romans 3; Galatians 3*)

What percentage of God's people are able to obey His Laws?

Romans 3:10-12 = 0% - There is no one righteous

Does this mean that no one has been able to receive the promises of God's Law?

Galatians 3:10-12 = Yes, all who rely on the Law are under its curses

Is God's Law, therefore, opposed to His promises?

Galatians 3:21-25 = No, the Law points us to Christ and our need for faith

So, how are we found righteous if not by the Law?

Romans 3:21-24 = God gives us righteousness through faith in Jesus

Applying God's Law Today (*Jeremiah 31:31-34*)

Since all fall short of being saved by obedience, how does God's Law apply to us? = Per Luther

1 Timothy 1:9-10 = Curb - The Law reveals the limits for how we live our lives

Romans 3:20; 7:7 = Mirror - The Law makes us aware of our sinfulness

Psalms 119:1-9 = Guide - The Law shows us how to live as His people

Which tablets of God's Law should we look to so they can serve these functions?

2 Corinthians 3:3 = The tablets that the Spirit has written on our hearts

Should we write the laws of God's covenant on our bodies and foreheads as commanded in Deut 6:8?

Jeremiah 31:31-34 = No, they are written on our minds and hearts through the new covenant

License to Sin? (*Romans 5-6*)

Were people who preceded Moses considered sinful for disobeying laws that had not yet been given?

Romans 5:12-14 = Not for the specific laws, but for living in sinfulness

Then what value was there in adding the law?

Romans 5:20-21 = Revealed the need for and greatness of God's grace in Christ

Does this mean that we should sin as much as we can so God can be even more gracious?

Romans 6:1-2, 6-7, 14 = No, we have been set free from sin to live under His grace

Does this freedom then permit us to sin as we please, knowing that God will give us His grace?

Romans 6:15-16, 18 = No, we are now slaves to righteousness

Why would we want to be slaves to righteousness?

Romans 6:22-23 = To receive eternal life with Him

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Law - Good or Bad? (*Romans 7:1-13*)

Should we therefore work to obey the Law so we can be slaves to righteousness?

Romans 7:1, 4 = No, we died to the law with Christ so it no longer has any authority over us

How does dying to the Law help us *bear fruit to God*?

Romans 7:5-6 = Instead of focusing on our failures we can live in the Spirit as God intended

Is Paul saying that the Law is evil and to be avoided?

Romans 7:7-9 = No, the Law shows our sinful nature and identifies our sin

Then how can sin and death come out of the Law?

Romans 7:12-13 = Sin used the holy law to produce unholy death

Who's In Control? (*Romans 7:14-25*)

Why is all of this so hard to understand?

Romans 7:14 = *The law is spiritual, but I am unspiritual*

How does our unspiritual nature show up in relation to the Law?

Romans 7:15-16 = *What I want to do I do not do, but what I hate I do*

What is the cause of this conflict if we died to the Law?

Romans 7:17-20 = Sin continues to live in our sinful nature

Do we just need to focus more on the Law?

Romans 7:21-23 = No, sin will continue to win out

Is there any way out of this mess?

Romans 7:24-25 = Yes, God's grace through faith in Jesus Christ

Closing Prayer

Response - Consider and meditate on one each day this week

1. What are recent examples where God has directed me through the Law that He placed in my heart?
(*Jeremiah 31:31-34; Matthew 15:17-20; Romans 2:14-15; 1 Corinthians 9:9-13; 2 Corinthians 3:3; Ephesians 6:5-6*)
2. What areas of God's moral law have I treated as if they don't apply to me?
(*Exodus 20:1-17; Deuteronomy 6:1-8; Proverbs 28:9; Matthew 5:17-20; 23:23-28*)
3. When has God's Law been effective as a curb in my life?
(*1 Timothy 1:9-10; Matthew 5:21-32; Galatians 3:19; 5:16-25*)
4. When has God's Law been effective as a mirror in my life?
(*Romans 3:20; 7:7; James 2:8-11; 1 John 3:4*)
5. When has God's Law been effective as a guide in my life?
(*Psalms 119; Ezekiel 36:27; Romans 6*)