



Stay Alive

with Jesus

Lesson 10: Directions for living

It's exciting to buy a new car. New cars look beautiful, drive well, sound good and even smell nice! With every new car comes a special book - the owner's manual. This little book tells you all about the various features of your new automobile, and it also gives important information on how to care for your car so it will run well. What kind of fuel, how much air pressure for the tires and how often to change the oil are a few of the things covered in a new car owner's manual.

Of course, you can choose to treat your new car anyway you wish, since you own it; but if you're wise, you'll follow the manufacturer's guidelines. After all, the people who made it ought to know best how to care for it.

There is an even more important owner's manual that you need to know about. It covers all you need to know about running your life and it comes from the creator of life.

What is the guidebook for running a successful life and what will it do for you? 2 Timothy 3:16-17

What did Jesus say people needed to do to have eternal life? Luke 18:18-22

Jesus emphasised two things that are essential to having eternal life; obeying the commandments and following Him. These two things are the earmarks of God's people at the end of time, too. How does the Bible describe God's last-day people? Revelation 12:17 (last part)

Two things will always distinguish true Christians; complete dedication to Jesus and obedience to His Word. In other words, Christians will love their Creator and follow His manual for their lives. Yet, sometimes you hear people say that the law has been done away with, that Christians no longer need to keep it. They say it was "nailed to the cross," and there is a text that sounds like that. It is Colossians 2:13-17.

What was nailed to the cross? Colossians 2:13-17

It sounds like some laws or regulations were done away with, yet what did Jesus say? Matthew 5:17-18

It seems like Paul, the writer of Colossians, and Jesus disagree. Paul talks about requirements that were nailed to the cross, yet Jesus said He didn't come to destroy the law but to fulfil it. How can we make sense out of this?

By understanding what the Bible means when it talks about laws and regulations.

To the Jews living at Christ's time, the word "Law," meant not only the ten commandments, but the Old Testament Scriptures (Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy) dealing with the requirements given to Israel. The word also meant the specific ten commandments, so how do we know when the Bible is talking about which?

FOUR SETS OF LAWS

We can understand it when we realise the various laws can be divided into four categories. What is the first law? Exodus 20:1-17

The first law is the moral law of God, His standard of living for His people. What is another category of law? Exodus 21, 22. Scan these chapters quickly just to get an idea of what they are about.

These are civil laws, or an amplification and application of the ten commandments laws. They're like a lot of laws we have today. In fact, someone estimated that we have about 35 million laws just to enforce the Ten Commandments.

What is another category of law? Leviticus 11-15. Read the headings of these chapters to get an idea of what it is about.

These are health laws. They resemble principles and guidelines taught in hospitals and health education centers around the world.

What is the last category of laws? Leviticus 16-27. Quickly look at the chapter's headings and subheadings to get an idea of what it is about.

These are ceremonial laws, regulations on how to conduct the temple service which was set up by God as a way for Israelites to take care of their sins.

To summarise, we find four kinds of laws in the Bible:

The Moral Law

God's Ten Commandment standard for living

The Civil Laws

Application of the Ten Commandments

The Health Laws

Sanitation and health regulations

The Ceremonial Laws

Instructions on worship and how to take care of sin

The question is which of these sets of laws were "nailed to the cross"? The Ten Commandments? Hardly, as our judicial system is still based on

them. The civil laws? Not if they are simply an expansion of the ten commandments. Civil laws are changed and modified to fit various societies, but they still exist. What about health laws? We don't have the same kind of laws, but we definitely have laws to protect our health.

This leaves only the ceremonial laws as the ones that have been done away with. And certainly this makes sense, because all those ceremonies were established for one reason only; to point forward to Jesus, the Lamb of God, who would take care of the sins of the world. When He died, people no longer needed to bring a lamb to the temple. They could now trust in Jesus as their sin-bearer.

Go back to Colossians 2:13-17 and notice especially verse 17 where it says these things were a "shadow of things to come." What law is a shadow? Hebrews 10:1

It is the ceremonial laws that were a "shadow of things to come" and which were done away with. We no longer need to sacrifice a lamb. We can trust in Jesus. In previous lessons, we've discussed how we are all sinners, all law-breakers. Yet Jesus became our lamb-sacrifice for sin. When we accept Him, our sins are forgiven. Once forgiven, do we ignore his law and go on sinning? Romans 6:1-2

What will motivate you to obey God's commandments? John 14:15

What additional help does God offer to help you live by His laws? Hebrews 8:10

ASK YOURSELF

Do I have both the ingredients of love and obedience in my life? Do I love Christ and want to obey His commandments — the “owner’s manual” for my life?
