



Portion:

Title:

SCRIPTURES

- Romans 2:17-29
- Deut. 10:16; 17:18-20; 30:6

CIRCUMCISION REIMAGINED

- A Paper Tiger
- Circumcision of the Heart

SEED:

“Indeed you are called a Jew, and **rest on the law**, and make your **boast in God**, and **know His will**, and **approve the things that are excellent**, being instructed out of the law, and are confident that you yourself are **a guide to the blind**, a **light to those who are in darkness**, an **instructor of the foolish**, a **teacher of babes**, having the form of knowledge and truth in the law. You, therefore, **who teach** another, **do you not teach yourself?** You who **preach** that a man should not steal, do you steal?” Romans 2:17-21 NKJV

FRUIT:

“for when Gentiles, who do not have the law, by nature do the things in the law, these, although not having the law, are a law to themselves, **who show the work of the law written in their hearts...**” Romans 2:14-15a NKJV

“For he is not a Jew who is one outwardly, nor is circumcision that which is outward in the flesh; but he is a Jew who is one inwardly; and circumcision is that of the heart, in the Spirit, not in the letter; whose praise is not from men but from God.” Romans 2:28-29 NKJV

NARRATIVE FOR TODAY’S SCRIPTURES: ROMANS 2:17-29

Last week in [Vernacular](#) (Romans 2:1-16)... Paul begins this portion of his letter with a scathing exposure of hypocrisy. Be warned; if you condemn someone for doing something that you are also involved in doing; it simply won’t be overlooked by God. God’s truth is by which all things are measured and this type of pure speciousness will never go unpunished. And don’t for a moment think that because God is patient and forgiving that He will give you a pass for doing what appears right, when just below the surface it is very wrong. His virtue actually indicates He expects you to repent for such arrogant and blatant hypocrisy, not live as if ignorance is bliss. If you persist, and let this behavior linger, the result of your unwillingness to repent will be as if you are building a storehouse of God’s rage and fury against you. And when the time is right it will be unleashed upon you.

Trust me, anyone with an impenitent heart, who denies the truth because he prefers to believe his own lies, will ultimately face

God's judgment and get exactly what he deserves. He will come face-to-face with God's extreme displeasure; and will experience severe mental, emotional, and physical pain. It will be as if he is required to carry God's burden. He will certainly regret his choice!

The converse is also true. Anyone whose life reflects the goodness of God no matter what his genetic heritage, who glorifies and honors God because he is inheriting a permanent place in His presence, whose life testifies that he knows he'll receive eternal rewards, seems to receive from God precisely what he offered to God: glory and honor. What a peaceful life he will live, regardless of his circumstances, if he just persists in doing every good thing as a response to being set-apart for an eternity, not to earn a set-apart place in eternity.

God never relents; He operates this way without compromise. If you are self-seeking and insist on believing lies, you get what you deserve. If you are humble and obedient to God, you get what you deserve. However, we must be clear; the empowerment to obey comes from God's grace—you could never do it on your own. It's just that the emphasis here is on outcomes. And with God, He is never partial when it comes to outcomes. That is why genetic heritage does not matter when it comes to eternal life and God's judgment.

Let's say you were raised Jewish, and you were trained in the Law. God's laws will be used as the standard by which you are measured. Nevertheless, His commands reign supreme whether you've heard about them or not. As such, when you consider all those who were raised in cultures knowing nothing of His laws, they too will be held accountable to them and will perish for their disobedience. That may appear unfair until you insert this understanding. No one can be obedient enough to inherit eternal life on their own, regardless of heritage, or their level of commitment to or knowledge of God's commands. Every person who has ever been saved by God is viewed the same way; he is just, not because he has knowledge of God's laws, not because he heard them, but because he does them; he practices them. And the ONLY way to do that perfectly is by His grace—and that's what it takes, perfect obedience. So, by His grace, both the ignorant and knowledgeable are justified! Make sense?

Let me add one clarifying tidbit. Doing God's commands is a "living" type of obedience. As was just emphasized, it's empowered and attainable only by God's grace. A bit later in this letter we will see an important contrast, but it is worth mentioning in advance. Working God's commands as if they are a list of deeds to be accomplished is a "dead" type of obedience, empowered by self-

determination. Strange, but that's no better than disobedience; it's actually a brand of legalism.

Let me summarize this part of the letter like this. Gentiles who have no previous experience with God's laws are able to actually obey God's laws organically. God touches their hearts and it's as if the laws have come off the pages of the Bible, parchment scrolls, or stone tablets, and been inserted via some type of spiritual surgery, directly into their hearts. It's like their minds have become awakened with God's ways and they begin acting accordingly. At that point, what they think and how they behave are measured against God's commands, as if they had known them their entire lives. In the end, what is inside of them will either act as an indictment against them or a pardon for every error they've ever made. And don't for a moment think any act or thought can be hidden from Almighty God. He sees it all.

This week in Romans 2:17-29... God's laws have leapt off the scrolls and into the hearts of the Gentiles. They have become spiritually awakened to God's ways and they are living accordingly. Now we can turn our attention back to the Jews who claim they find their solid foundation in God's laws; they say they are anchored to His commands. The mere fact that they have been guided by and held strict adherence to the law, in their own minds, is a form of open praise to Yahweh. They revel in the idea that they

know the will of the Father because of this, and they outwardly align with what is superior, by claiming their standards are derived from God's laws.

Naturally, they feel confident they should be in a leadership position, directing the path of those who were not raised with God's laws, and as such had lived in darkness, like spiritually blind people who need a burst of bright light to open their eyes. They would consider these souls like silly lost children and would take on the roles of teacher and mentor to them, but would start at the most rudimentary level. They believe that knowing God's law has given them a brand of wisdom and insight into the most important truths.

However, there is a scathing rebuke of such presumptive leaders if they are not walking their talk, not living in submission to the very commands they claim are so vital. In other words, do you practice what you preach? Do you follow your own advice? It is clear that God's law speaks harshly against things like theft, adulterous behavior, and idolatry. But worse than all of those, in a sense, is hypocrisy. It's bad enough to simply be disobedient, but it's altogether an abomination to brag about your obedience, while behind the scenes you are a complete wretch. It's the worst type of stain against God's reputation, especially when those raised without the knowledge of God's laws are watching. There is literally nothing more shameful, disgraceful, or blasphemous to God.

Think about circumcision as the perfect object lesson. Jews strictly adhere to the practice of circumcision. It's a sign of their covenant with God. And it's obviously beneficial if you take it seriously, meaning you do it because it is an outward act of obedience. But, if you are just going to violate God's other commands all over the place, what good is it? You might as well be uncircumcised because in God's eyes your physical circumcision has become irrelevant. And quite the opposite is also true. A man raised without God's commands, who comes to love and obey His instructions by faith, who begins to live in obedience to God organically, he is literally viewed by God as if he is circumcised! And quite frankly, it would reverse the roles; he would become the one evaluating the behavior of those raised under the strict guidelines of the law, who habitually transgress it.

We can summarize this entire upside-down situation like this: physical circumcision, which has become synonymous with being a Jew, is not what truly makes someone a Jew. It's only a particular sign and that gets completely negated if you live an otherwise disobedient lifestyle. Conversely, and regardless of your "original heritage", if you have become empowered by God and you live a life of obedience and submission to Him, it is considered by God that you are indeed circumcised, but not outwardly in the flesh. Instead, it is your inner man, your heart that is circumcised unto the

Lord. It's all about the Holy Spirit first, not a list of commands. Obedience to God's commands has become a natural consequence of God's grace; it is inspired and empowered by the Almighty Himself. At that point, what man thinks is irrelevant because God is the One who will acknowledge your standing in His eyes.

"Think in Bible." DJH

INTRODUCTION TO TODAY'S MESSAGE:

Those who have been instructed from the Torah, traditionally the Jews, by inference practice what is, "the excellent and superior way of life," and by extension say, "they know God's will." Someday in the millennial kingdom, Christians will rule and reign as overseers with Christ within God's governmental system, which naturally uses His laws as the framework for a well-functioning and healthy society. So, it must stand to reason that being well-versed in the grace-empowered administration of God's commands is necessary.

Presently, many who come to Y'shua from the Jewish faith should have an advantage, having been raised in a biblical law-based culture. The opportunity to become teachers and mentors to others, who have come to faith in Christ, but from a pagan world, is vast. Faithful Jews simply have the upbringing, background, and previous knowledge to do it well. Wouldn't it be prudent to develop

a duplicatable system that institutes God's laws in a fresh new way? It must be inspired and empowered by God's grace, not the same system that, in many ways, blinded Jews from recognizing Y'shua.

However, if you claim to represent God, while living in habitual disobedience, your hypocrisy can damage new converts, either by teaching them that authenticity and integrity are unnecessary, or by misrepresenting the intention and application of God's commands, causing those weaker in the faith to stumble. What is most critical to recognize, however, is that obedience to the Law is a matter of the heart. Your motivation, intention, inspiration, and what empowers your obedience is what is most important. That does not discount the value of actually obeying God's commands; it just emphasizes that how and why you obey matters more.

Paul is not teaching anything that is not completely consistent with the writings of Moses. Your discipleship training is really rulership training for God's kingdom, and leadership training for your personal development. You are supposed to learn how to apply the power of God's grace toward His divine instructions: spiritual practices, lifestyle laws, and even the physical laws of the universe. To do so you should practice implementing grace-empowered obedience right now, here on earth, during this life. That is what will insert the government of heaven into everything you do; that is what will bring the kingdom of heaven to earth.

A PAPER TIGER

1. The Excellence of God's Law

A. Proper Understanding of the Law

(1) Approving Excellent Things

(a) Indeed you are called a Jew, and rest on the law...

1. "Indeed you are called a Jew, and **rest on the law**, and make your **boast in God**, and **know His will**, and **approve the things that are excellent**, being instructed out of the law, and are confident that you yourself are **a guide to the blind**, a **light to those who are in darkness**, an **instructor of the foolish**, a **teacher of babes**, having the form of knowledge and truth in the law." Romans 2:17-20 NKJV

2. Rest in the law, instructed out of the law, the form of knowledge and truth in the law, so...

a) If you are a **Jew**, you **rest on the law**...

- 1) Presently, many who come to Y'shua from the Jewish faith should have an advantage, having been raised in a biblical law-based culture.
- 2) The Jews in the first century were comprised mostly of those whose heritage was from the tribes of Judah, Levi, and half of Benjamin. Those were the tribes that made up the Southern

Kingdom of Israel before they were scattered in the exile to Babylon. They had come back into the land of Israel. The Northern Kingdom remains in exile, even to this very day. Scholars believe they eventually occupied Northern and Western Europe, whose people eventually scattered across the globe. The word British literally means “Covenant Man” in Hebrew. {brit = covenant} {ish = man}

- 3) The law is their firm foundation; they say they are anchored to God’s commands.
- 4) Their culture and communities were built around God’s laws (the Torah), and the Tabernacle/Temple service.
- 5) The Torah is the equivalent to the US Constitution (a founding document by which all other laws are based and must be consistent.)

b) You **boast in God**.

- 1) The mere fact that they have been guided by and held strict adherence to the law, in their own minds, is a form of open praise to Yahweh.
- 2) We worship the One True God!

c) You **know His will**.

- 1) Those who have been instructed from the Torah, traditionally the Jews, by inference practice what is, “the excellent and superior way of life,” and by extension say, “they know God’s will.”
 - 2) Someday in the millennial kingdom, Christians will rule and reign as overseers with Christ within God’s governmental system, which naturally uses His laws as the framework for a well-functioning and healthy society.
 - 3) So, it must stand to reason that being well-versed in the grace-empowered administration of God’s commands is necessary. (See: [From Faith to Faith](#))
 - 4) Know His law; know His will: They revel in the idea that they know the will of the Father.
- d) What is the will of the Father?
- 1) Certainly, knowing His Word (Oracles) is going to give you a distinct advantage!
 - 2) “***What advantage then has the Jew, or what is the profit of circumcision? Much in every way! Chiefly because to them were committed the oracles of God.***” Romans 3:1-2 NKJV

- 3) *“If anyone speaks, **let him speak as the oracles of God...**”* I Peter 4:11a NKJV
- e) Please watch the intro to [Vernacular](#). In it, Pastor Manny said: *“You don’t find the will of God for your life; the will of Gods finds you!”* But how?
 - 1) *“I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you **present** your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service. And **do not be conformed** to this world, but be **transformed** by the renewing of your mind, that you may **prove** what is that good and acceptable and **perfect will of God.**”* Romans 12:1-2 NKJV
 - 2) **Present** (an action) your life to God; **Avoid** (an action) being like the pagans; **Transform** (an action) your way of thinking; so you can **Prove** (an action) that God’s will for your life **already exists!**
- f) You approve the **things that are excellent.**
 - 1) To outwardly align with what is superior, by deriving your values and standards from God’s laws.

g) You are confident you can **guide the blind, be a light to those who are in darkness, and an instructor to the foolish!**

- 1) Those who have a proper understanding of the law have an opportunity to become teachers and mentors to those who have come to faith in Christ from a pagan world.
- 2) They should consider these souls like silly lost children and should take on the roles of teacher and mentor, and should start at the most rudimentary level. Why should they take on this responsibility?
- 3) Faithful Jews have the upbringing, background, and previous knowledge to open spiritually blind eyes, to shed a burst of bright light, which dispels darkness and restores sight. They can teach those who know so little, mentoring the young and immature in the faith.
- 4) Naturally, they should feel confident they can serve in this leadership position, directing the path of those who were not raised with God's laws.

h) You have **the form of knowledge and truth in the law.**

- 1) They believe that knowing God's law has given them a brand of wisdom and insight into the most important truths.
- 2) The Jews who become Christians start off with a clear advantage according to Paul.
- 3) They have been raised with the knowledge of truth of God's instructions.
- 4) However, many of them have only a "**form** of knowledge and truth" and their version of the law is quite tainted! More on that a little later.
- 5) First let's take an in-depth look at how we should all view God's commandments.

B. Proper Application of the Law

(1) Words of Divine Revelation

(a) Write a copy of this law in a book...

1. ""Also it shall be, when he sits on the throne of his kingdom, that **he shall write for himself a copy of this law in a book**, from the one before the priests, the Levites. And **it shall be with him**, and **he shall read it all the days of his life**, that he may **learn to fear the Lord his God** and be **careful to observe all**

the words of this law and these statutes, **that his heart may not be lifted** above his brethren, that he may **not turn aside from the commandment** to the right hand or to the left, and **that he may prolong his days** in his kingdom, he and his children in the midst of Israel.”Deuteronomy 17:18-20 NKJV

2. Why do kings need to KNOW THE LAW?

- a) Ultimately it matters not if you started out as a Jew or Gentile. Any ruler must become adept at the proper administration of the laws of his kingdom.
- b) It is no different for those who intend to be part of the ruling class in Yahweh’s eternal Kingdom.
- c) Those who will rule and reign with Christ must be well-versed in grace empowered administration of God’s commands.
- d) Even the ancient Kings of Israel were commanded to inscribe a complete Torah in their own hand and to study it daily, as training to rule well.
- e) Understanding the proper application of God’s law will dramatically improve the potential for those who are disciplined by it.
- f) So, **be with it** and **read it all the days of your life!**

3. How and why would you study God’s law?

- a) To practice obeying it and to be blessed!
 - 1) “...**if you diligently obey** the voice of the Lord your God, to observe carefully all His commandments... the Lord your God will set you **high above all nations** of the earth. And **all these blessings** shall come upon you and **overtake you, because** you obey the voice of the Lord your God:” Deuteronomy 28:1-2 NKJV
- b) To learn to fear the Lord!
 - 1) “The **fear** of the Lord is **the beginning of wisdom**, And the **knowledge** of the Holy One is **understanding**.” Proverbs 9:10 NKJV
- c) To protect your heart from pride!
 - 1) “**Pride goes before destruction**, And a haughty spirit before a fall.” Proverbs 16:18 NKJV
- d) To never turn away from God’s commands; to use them to rule well!
 - 1) “All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is **profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work**.” II Timothy 3:16-17 NKJV

- e) To live long and prosper.
 - 1) “You shall **walk in all the ways which the Lord** your God has commanded you, that you may live and that it may be well with you, and that **you may prolong your days** in the land which you shall possess.” Deuteronomy 5:33 NKJV
- f) To raise a successful family.
 - 1) “You shall therefore **keep His statutes and His commandments** which I command you today, that it may go well with you and **with your children after you**, and that you may **prolong your days** in the land which the Lord your God is giving you for all time.” Deuteronomy 4:40 NKJV

C. Proper Perspective of the Law

- (1) Instead of ridiculing God’s laws, magnify them!
 - (a) Blessed is the man who delights in God’s law...
 - 1. “Blessed is the man Who walks not in the counsel of the ungodly, Nor stands in the path of sinners, Nor sits in the seat of the scornful; **But his delight is in the law of the Lord, And in His law he meditates day and night.**” Psalms 1:1-2 NKJV
 - (b) A small sample of the 176 verses of Psalm 119...

1. “Blessed are the undefiled in the way, **Who walk in the law** of the Lord! Blessed are those **who keep His testimonies**, Who seek Him with the whole heart! They also do no iniquity; They **walk in His ways**. You have commanded us To **keep Your precepts diligently**. Oh, that my ways were directed To **keep Your statutes**! Then I would not be ashamed, **When I look into all Your commandments.**” Psalms 119:1-6 NKJV
2. And that’s just the first six of 176 verses...
 - a) Throughout the Psalms, we share in David’s life and experiences. We see his authentic repentance, his spirit of praise and worship, his childlike faith that God would protect him, and his belief that God would avenge him and set him on high in the midst of all his enemies. And, in David’s worship, we witness his profound love for God’s Laws.
 - b) From his heart, David wrote the longest chapter in the Bible. All 176 verses of Psalm 119 give honor to the LORD in all His ways and pay tribute to the beauty of His Law.

c) On this subject, I am compelled to borrow notes from *Matthew Henry*, an 18th century Christian biblical scholar and author of the voluminous commentary which bears his name.

1) *“The general scope and design of it is to **magnify the Law**, and **make it honourable**; to set forth **the excellency and usefulness of divine revelation**, and to recommend it to us, not only for the entertainment, but **for the government, of ourselves**, by the psalmist’s [King David] own example, who speaks by experience of **the benefit of it**, and of the **good impressions made upon him by it**, for which he praises God, and earnestly prays, from first to last, **for the continuance of God’s grace with him, to direct and quicken him in the way of his duty.**”*

Matthew Henry ~circa 1710

d) I am quickly reminded of Paul’s words when I read the words of Mr. Henry...“the **continuance of God’s grace** with him, to direct and quicken him in the way of his duty.”

e) The ongoing access to God’s grace empowers our lives as Christians, but for what? Divine revelation

for the governance of ourselves! To obey his every command, so our lives reflect His glory!

- 1) *“eternal life to those who by **patient continuance in doing good** seek for glory, honor, and immortality;”* Romans 2:7 NKJV
- 2) *“Therefore, having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, **through whom also we have access by faith into this grace in which we stand**, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God.”* Romans 5:1-2 NKJV
- f) *Matthew Henry* (like Paul) understood the immense advantage of using God’s Laws as the fibers to weave together the moral, economic, and political fabric of our individual lives and society.
 - 1) *“All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is **profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work.**”* II Timothy 3:16-17 NKJV
- g) ⁽¹⁾As the Body of Christ, it is our duty to establish governance using God’s Law, if we hope to reap

the immeasurable benefits of living under God's government.

a) ⁽¹⁾See **Section D** below: A New System of Government (for self and society)

h) Throughout the 176 verses of Psalm 119, David confesses to the goodness and value of God's Laws. Keep in mind, David is a man whose heart exemplifies the heart of God. We would be wise to emulate his example. To capture the diverse essence of the God's instructions (the Torah), David uses ten different words with identical meaning to characterize the expression of God's will. The Law is called His: way, testimonies, commandments, precepts, word, judgments, righteousness, statutes, truth, and in verse 132, he even calls it His name!

a) *"Look upon me and be merciful to me, As Your custom is toward those **who love Your name.**"*

Psalms 119:132 NKJV

(c) The Apostle Paul confirms that it is through the Law that God reveals His will (which is right where we began today).

1. "Indeed you are called a Jew, and rest on the Law, and make your boast in God, **and know His will**, and

approve the things that are excellent, **being instructed out of the Law.**" Romans 2:17-18 NKJV

- a) Again, let us turn to *Matthew Henry* who expresses it so well. He wrote this in the early 1700's. What excuse can we possibly fabricate today, as Christians, to defend our ignorance of the Law?
 - 1) "*There are **ten different words** by which **divine revelation** is called in this psalm, and they are synonymous, each of them expressive of the whole compass of it (both that which tells us **what God expects from us and that which tells us that we may expect from Him**) and of the system of religion which is founded upon it and guided by it.*"
 - 2) Matthew Henry refers to God's Laws as divine revelation; in other words, **His will for our lives, "both what He expects from us and what we can expect from Him."** Why would anyone wish to abolish God's Law?
- b) He continues...and could it be any more convicting!

- 1) *“The great esteem and affection David had for the word of God is the more admirable considering **how little he had of it**, in comparison with what we have, no more perhaps in writing than the first books of Moses, which were but the dawning of this day, **which may shame us** who enjoy the full discoveries of divine revelation and yet are **so cold towards it**.”*
- c) **Divine revelation:** His will for our lives, “both what He expects from us and what we can expect from Him.”
 - 1) *“Also it shall be, **when he sits on the throne of his kingdom, that he shall write for himself a copy of this law in a book**, from the one before the priests, the Levites.” Deuteronomy 17:18 NKJV*
 - 2) *“All Scripture **is given by inspiration of God** [Divine Revelation], and is **profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work**.” II Timothy 3:16-17 NKJV*

D. (1)A New System of Government (for self and society)

(1) Someday in the Millennial Kingdom, we will rule and reign with Christ inside God's governmental systems (Revelation 20:4).

(a) And His kingdom will never end...

1. **"Your throne, O God, is forever and ever; A scepter of righteousness is the scepter of Your kingdom."**

Psalms 45:6 NKJV

2. **"And He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of His kingdom there will be no end."**

Luke 1:33 NKJV

1. See [Caught Up Together](#) to learn more about the rapture and the Millennial Kingdom.

(2) One day we will be the administrators of God's Laws

(a) As the Body of Christ, it is our duty to establish governance using God's Law, even now!

1. **"Of the increase of His government and peace There will be no end, Upon the throne of David and over His kingdom, To order it and establish it with judgment and justice From that time forward, even forever. The zeal of the Lord of hosts will perform this."** Isaiah 9:7 NKJV

2. There will be no end to God's governance!

- a) Wouldn't it be prudent to develop a duplicatable system that institutes God's laws in a fresh new way?
- b) It must be inspired and empowered by God's grace, not the same system that, in many ways, blinded Jews from recognizing Y'shua.

(3) Inspired and Ordered Governance

- (a) This application of God's Word (Laws) will work for individuals, marriages, families, communities, organizations, and governments!

1. "But also for this very reason, giving all diligence, add to your **faith** virtue, to **virtue** knowledge, to **knowledge** self-control, to **self-control** perseverance, to **perseverance** godliness, to **godliness** brotherly **kindness**, and to brotherly kindness **love**. For if these things are yours and abound, **you will be neither barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.**" II Peter 1:5-8 NKJV

2. Commentary:

- a) Everything begins with the gift of faith. Without God's grace birthing faith to believe, we would all remain in our ignorance as lost souls. But we believe and are made righteous by God to then

live by faith, to practice our faith. Faith is the foundation of EVERYTHING as a Christian! And thus, every problem, question, dilemma, decision, conflict...every thought, should be filtered through your faith. Faith is the place-holder for everything. Put you current circumstance in the position where faith sits and then go on this journey!

- b) We begin by doing what David did, learn God's ways and mediate on them day and night. Seek the Lord's voice and His heart, His moral standards on every matter before you make your first move. His sheep hear His voice (John 10:27), so you need not doubt He will speak and you can hear. This is the only version of **virtue** that matters. Always ask, *"What does God think about this?"*
- c) Then seek **knowledge**. God has spoken but that does not mean you have all the information you need, all the facts and data. There is often a knowledge gap between God's directives and your ability to fulfill those directives. So, fill in the gap by seeking what you need to know to do what God is telling you to do. Consult godly people and

research what you must know before you take action.

- d) And yes, doing what you are told to do is critical. You can't just think about it. **Self-control** is that character trait that allows you to either do what you should do, or not do what you shouldn't! But taking action before you hear God's voice, know His heart, or while you still remain ignorant is a disaster waiting to happen. However, when you have walked diligently through these steps, not taking action might even be a worse disaster. And once you begin to take action, ask this question: *"How long should I continue doing what I'm supposed to do?"* That should be an easy one! *"As long as it takes!"*
- e) And that is why following your demonstration of self-control, the action step, you must be steadfast until you have your breakthrough. **Perseverance** is permanent self-control. Don't quit; don't stop; don't surrender; don't grow weary in doing good; your breakthrough is coming (Galatians 6:9). Sometimes there is a delay in achieving your desired outcome because life is filled with tests

and trials. God loves giving tests! So, persevere through the trials; your victory awaits!

- f) I say this with one asterisk next to perseverance.
 - 1) ***Humility:** if you are not getting the results you expect when you've gone from faith to virtue to knowledge to self-control and you have been grinding out perseverance, be humble enough to go back and "check your work." Maybe you made a mistake; maybe you missed God's voice; maybe you heard what you wanted to hear; maybe you didn't gather all the information you need, etc. The bottom line is this. Rewind and review if you've made an error. It happens! If not, press on! If so, correct and press on!
- g) These first four steps built on faith is the "stuff of life." Everyday, all day, at all times, apply and reapply in THIS ORDER: **Virtue, Knowledge, Self-control, and Perseverance** to everything. Don't skip steps and don't change the order! If you do you are assured of mistakes. These are where the "rubber hits the road" in daily living. They are the working steps that yield an outcome.

- h) And that is why **Godliness** is next. We can cut right through the thickets and avoid all sorts of super-spiritual definitions of Godliness and define it like this. *“Godliness is wholistic integrity.”* Integrity is an architectural term that simply means the building materials are being utilized within the greatest strengths and tolerances of their natural properties. There is perfect alignment between functional properties and use! Cables work great to suspend things from above; concrete works great to support things from below. Use one in place of the other and your bridge will collapse! For us, wholistic integrity simply means that every aspect of your life, as a wholistic being (spirit, soul and body), is in alignment with how and why God made you! That’s Godliness. And there are a myriad of subcategories under each aspect.
- i) There is also an important asterisk with Godliness.
- 1) *Godliness is not perfection. The Bible teaches that you are to “...exercise yourself toward godliness.” (I Timothy 4:7). As long as you are authentic and your heart and intentions are to apply and reapply Virtue, Knowledge, Self-

control, and Perseverance in order, to everything in every aspect of your life, that is Godliness!

- j) Yet, Godliness is not just meant for your own benefit and that is why you get to share it with everyone around you. And that is why **brotherly kindness** naturally follows. This is the mutual affectionation you share with your fellow humans, and you can do it effectively because you are deeply dedicated to practicing godliness in every arena of life! Again this is an outcome of the continual day-to-day application of **Faith, Virtue, Knowledge, Self-control, and Perseverance**.
- k) And finally, can you imagine what a man would look like if he was able to do this all day everyday for everyone? He would look like Y'shua. And that is why the culmination of perfect governance is love! *"God is love."* (I John 4:7) For this there is no asterisk. It is who we are called to be like and that is why **we are diligent to add to our faith**, not just rest in our secured eternity!
- l) Yet, there remains this potential problem that we identified earlier...a FORM of knowledge...

1) “having **the form of knowledge and truth in the law.**” Romans 2:20

m) And now we have the remedy; do this and you will never be short of knowledge!

1) Add to your faith virtue, knowledge, self-control, perseverance, godliness, brotherly kindness, and love.

2) “For ***if these things are yours and abound, you will be neither barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.***” II Peter 1:8
NKJV

E. **Wrong Application of the Law**

(1) Are you listening to yourself? Do you hear your own words?

(a) A paper tiger?

1. “**You, therefore, who teach another, do you not teach yourself? You who preach that a man should not steal, do you steal?**” Romans 2:21 NKJV

2. A paper tiger is a euphemism used to describe what outwardly appears powerful, but inwardly is weak or ineffectual.

a) **Outwardly:** you depend on the law; praise God; walk in His will; affirm that His instructions are

superior; certain you can guide pagans by shedding light into darkness; instruct the lost; and teach new converts.

b) **Inwardly:** You instruct others but don't follow your own teaching and preaching.

1) *“Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you travel land and sea **to win one proselyte, and when he is won, you make him twice as much a son of hell as yourselves.** {27} “Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you are like whitewashed tombs which indeed **appear beautiful outwardly, but inside are full of dead men’s bones and all uncleanness.**” Matthew 23:15, 27 NKJV*

2) Hypocrisy: when the outer man is not integrity with inner man, or vice versa.

3) See [Hypocratisudes](#) for a detailed teaching on Matthew 23 and hypocrisy.

c) There is a scathing rebuke of such presumptive leaders if they are not walking their talk, not living in submission to the very commands they claim are so vital. In other words, do you practice what you preach? Do you follow your own advice?

- d) In Romans 14, Paul distinguishes those who are weak in the faith from those who are strong. You will notice that there is immense value in a **proper understanding, proper application, and proper perspective** of the Law of God, and not just for the Kings, as described in Deuteronomy 17:18-20.
- 1) *“Receive one who is **weak in the faith**, but not to disputes over doubtful things. **For one believes he may eat all things, but he who is weak eats only vegetables.** Let not him who eats despise him who does not eat, and let not him who does not eat judge him who eats; for God has received him.”* Romans 14:1-3 NKJV
- e) Those coming from Israel into faith in Y’shua have the initial calling and opportunity to be teachers and mentors to those who come in from the pagan world, simply because they have the upbringing to do so.
- 1) If you are versed in the Torah you would know precisely to what Paul is referring in Romans 14:1-3, and it’s not likely what the modern-day Christian has been taught.

2) More on this later in **Section F** below:

(2) Misrepresenting the Faith.

(b) I hate sin, but I love my sin!

1. “**You who say**, “Do not commit **adultery**,” do you commit adultery? **You who abhor idols**, do you rob temples?” Romans 2:22 NKJV

2. Adultery and Idolatry

a) It is clear that God’s law speaks harshly against things like theft, adulterous behavior, and idolatry. But worse than all of those, in a sense, is hypocrisy. It’s bad enough to simply be disobedient, but it’s altogether an abomination to brag about your obedience, while behind the scenes you are a complete wretch.

b) There is little doubt that Paul purposely places adultery and idolatry side-by-side. There is likely no greater idolatrous pressure than to gratify your own sexual desires and no worse circumstance to pervert that desire than within marriage. (See: [In the Image of God](#) to see how sexually immorality is the gateway sin.)

c) Even the early teachings for Gentiles emphasized these laws.

1) *“Therefore I judge that we should not trouble those from among the **Gentiles who are turning to God**, but that we write to them to **abstain from things polluted by idols [Idolatry], from sexual immorality [Adultery], from things strangled, and from blood [knowing what you can eat].**” Acts 15:19-20 NKJV*

(c) You claim the law is great, yet you bring dishonor to God by violating it!

1. **“You who make your boast in the law, do you dishonor God through breaking the law?”** Romans 2:23 NKJV

2. Please don't boast in the Law and violate it at the same time; it is a horrible witness.

a) To claim you represent Yahweh and then disobey Him is already bad enough.

b) Even worse is when believers, who come into the faith with a previous understanding of the Torah, then misrepresent the intention and application of Yahweh's commands and cause those **weaker in the faith to stumble.**

c) We will cover this warning about causing your brother to stumble in detail in **Section F** below:

(2) Misrepresenting the Faith.

(d) Tarnishing God's Name!

1. "For *"**the name of God is blasphemed among the Gentiles because of you,**" as it is written." Romans 2:24 NKJV

2. There is literally nothing more shameful, disgraceful, or blasphemous to God

a) It's the worst type of stain against God's reputation, especially when those raised without the knowledge of God's laws are watching..

1) *"*Now therefore, what have I here,*" says the Lord, "*That **My people are taken away for nothing?** Those who rule over them Make them wail,*" says the Lord, "***And My name is blasphemed continually every day.***" Isaiah 52:5 NKJV

2) *My people are taken away for nothing?* All they had to do was obey God, but they refused and instead were hypocrites! As a result, God's name was tarnished in the presence of pagans.

(e) When you practice what you preach against, **God is blasphemed!** (We saw this at the start of Romans 2.)

1. “Therefore you are inexcusable, O man, whoever you are who judge, for in whatever you judge another you condemn yourself; **for you who judge practice the same things.**” Romans 2:1 NKJV (See [Vernacular](#) for full teaching on Romans 2:1-16)
2. The worst hypocrisy! (Romans 2:21-23)
 - a) You teach another; do you not teach yourself?
 - b) You who preach against theft, adultery, and idolatry; do you steal, fornicate, and worship idols?
 - c) You brag about the law, yet you are lawless!

F. (2) Misrepresenting the Faith

- (1) Authenticity and integrity are unnecessary! That is what you are saying when you claim to represent God, while living in habitual disobedience.
 - (a) Paul leaves Timothy in Ephesus to lovingly spread good doctrine and to correct bad doctrine, which is being propagated by those who have strayed from the truth!
 1. “**desiring to be teachers of the law, understanding neither what they say nor the things which they affirm.**” 1 Timothy 1:7 NKJV

2. Those who desire to teach the law “have a form of knowledge.”
 - a) They speak and affirm things about the law that they don’t understand or live up to.
- (b) In the last days...
 1. “But know this, that **in the last days** perilous times will come: For men will be lovers of themselves, lovers of money, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, unloving, unforgiving, slanderers, without self-control, brutal, despisers of good, traitors, headstrong, haughty, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God, **having a form of godliness but denying its power.** And from such people turn away! For of this sort are those who creep into households and make captives of gullible women loaded down with sins, led away by various lusts, {7} **always learning and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth.**” II Timothy 3:1-7 NKJV
 2. The last days can refer any of the days between Y’shua’s birth and His second coming, and in this verse it intimates a time closer to His second coming.
 - a) There is that idea again...Those who desire to teach the law “have a form of knowledge,” and in

this case it's "a form of godliness" that denies God's grace (power).

b) They can try to learn forever, but without His grace they will never be able to come to the knowledge of the truth.

c) They will be stuck with a "form of knowledge."

(c) In latter times...

1. "Now the Spirit expressly says that **in latter times** some will **depart from the faith, giving heed to deceiving spirits and doctrines of demons**, speaking **lies in hypocrisy**, having their own conscience seared with a hot iron, **forbidding to marry**, and **commanding to abstain from foods which God created to be received** with thanksgiving **by those who believe and know the truth**. For **every creature of God is good**, and **nothing is to be refused** if it is received with thanksgiving; for it is **sanctified by the word of God and prayer**." I Timothy 4:1-5 NKJV
2. Again referring to a time closer to Y'shua's second coming—faithless men filled with hypocrisy will spread lies!
 - a) These are deceiving spirits who spread doctrines of demons: Is this referring to God's laws?

- 1) Unequivocally no!
- b) By extension, can anything that follows in this passage be referring to the laws of God?
 - 1) Unequivocally no!
- c) Deceiving spirits/doctrine of demons: forbids marriage.
 - 1) Disparaging marriage reads like an editorial or op-ed in the New York Times.
- d) You must abstain from specific foods which God created to be received with thanksgiving.
 - 1) However, You might not know what God created to be eaten as food, if you are ignorant of God's laws. (In Romans 14 they are called weak in the faith.)
- e) Those who do know what is permitted are those who confidently believe and know the truth. They have true knowledge of the law (and it's proper application), as opposed to those who have a "form of knowledge."
- f) Thus, every creature God created [for food] is good to eat, even if there are some movements out there that claim otherwise.

- g) You can eat anything God permits, even when certain men claim you can't.
 - h) Pray and thank God for all foods that were set apart by God (sanctified in His word) as your provisions.
- (d) Hypocrisy can damage new converts. But, even worse is to misrepresent the intention and application of God's commands, and cause those weaker in the faith to stumble!
1. **"Receive one who is weak in the faith,** but not to disputes over doubtful things. For **one believes he may eat all things, but he who is weak eats only vegetables.** Let not **him who eats** despise **him who does not eat,** and **let not him who does not eat judge him who eats;** for God has received him." Romans 14:1-3 NKJV
 2. The one who is weak eats only vegetables. Why?
 - a) They are not familiar with the law that gives them clear instructions about what is clean meat to eat.
 - b) Someone who has a clear understanding is stronger in the faith!
 - c) However, don't either of you disparage the other. If you are trained in what you can eat, don't belittle

someone who is not yet trained. And if you are untrained, in your ignorance, don't voice your negative opinion about someone who has liberty to eat because of his knowledge about the law.

(e) Am I saying that eating unclean food no longer matters?

1. "Therefore **let us not judge one another anymore**, but rather resolve this, **not to put a stumbling block or a cause to fall in our brother's way**. I know and am convinced by the Lord Jesus that **there is nothing unclean of itself; but to him who considers anything to be unclean, to him it is unclean**. Yet if your brother is grieved because of your food, you are no longer walking in love. **Do not destroy with your food the one for whom Christ died.**" Romans

14:13-15 NKJV

2. This can become quite confusing, so we must keep things within a biblical framework we've learned about food!

- a) The short answer is NO!
- b) The key here, however, is to prioritize the needs of your brother.

- c) Remember the context: ***“Receive one who is weak in the faith, but not to disputes over doubtful things.”*** Romans 14:1 NKJV
- d) Don’t cause a weak brother to stumble
 - 1) Weak = not well-versed in Scripture.
- e) We, who know the truth, know there is nothing unclean of itself.
 - 1) Context: nothing is unclean that God has called clean! (See Acts 10:28)
- f) However, if someone weak in the faith believes something clean is unclean, then to him it is unclean.
 - 1) Context: don’t eat in front of him what he believes to be unclean.
- g) It is not loving to exercise your liberty to eat something because you have the knowledge that it is clean, if it will cause grief for your brother.
- (f) Don’t let confusion over food wreck someone’s faith.
 - 1. **“Do not destroy the work of God for the sake of food. All things indeed are pure, but it is evil for the man who eats with offense. It is good neither to eat meat nor drink wine nor do anything by which your brother stumbles or is offended or is made weak. Do**

you have faith? **Have it to yourself** before God.

Happy is he who does not condemn himself in what he approves. But he who doubts is condemned if he eats, because he does not eat from faith; for whatever is not from faith is sin.” Romans 14:20-23

NKJV

2. Again, don't lose the context here. *“All things indeed are pure?”*

- a) All things pure are pure, obviously. Paul is not suddenly saying anything goes. And if he would say that about food, why not sex with your neighbor because you think you love her?
- b) What he is saying here is that, sure what God says is clean to eat is clean, but if eating it offends someone then it is evil to do so.
- c) This is not about food or wine, per se. It's about your love for a weak brother and your concern that your actions could offend him or cause him to stumble (even if what you are eating or drinking is permitted by God).
- d) Your faith should protect you from exercising your right to eat when it might confuse someone else.

- e) Conversely, someone who has doubts about the food he's about to consume, condemns himself if he eats because he is violating his faith, his own conscience, and whatever is not from faith is sin.
- f) And there is not a better place to be reminded of context than Peter's vision with the unclean animals on the blanket.
- (g) Peter's Vision and Subsequent Ministry: Acts 10:9-11:18
 - 1. **On Simon's Rooftop in Joppa:** "But Peter said, "Not so, Lord! For **I have never eaten anything common or unclean.**" And a voice spoke to him again the second time, "**What God has cleansed you must not call common.**"'" Acts 10:14-15 NKJV
 - 2. **In the house of Cornelius:** "Then he said to them, "You know how unlawful it is for a Jewish man to keep company with or go to one of another nation. **But God has shown me that I should not call any man common or unclean.**" Acts 10:28 NKJV
 - 3. **Peter defends preaching to the Gentiles:** "But I said, 'Not so, Lord! **For nothing common or unclean has at any time entered my mouth.**' But the voice answered me again from heaven, '**What God has**

cleansed you must not call common.” Acts 11:8-9
NKJV

4. **The vision was about men, NOT animals:** “If **therefore God gave them the same gift as He gave us** when we believed on the Lord Jesus Christ, **who was I that I could withstand God?”** Acts 11:17 NKJV
5. Let’s dial this in once and for all...
 - a) Peter is going to be called to preach to the Gentiles and God knows he won’t want to do it!
 - b) God orchestrates an elaborate plan between Simon, Peter and Cornelius to open Peter’s heart.
 - c) He presents Peter unclean animals on blanket three times in a vision and all three times, after he instructed to eat, he refuses because the food is unclean.
 - d) God tells him each time that what He has cleansed, Peter should not call common. This could be misconstrued to believe God has ended His dietary laws for Christians, however....
 - e) When Peter tell his testimony in Cornelius’ house, he gives us God’s interpretation of the vision (so you need not make it up): ***“God has shown me***

that I should not call any man common or unclean."

- f) Why do Christians still insist that the vision was about food when we have the exact interpretation, in writing, immediately afterwards?
- g) Then, when Peter tells his testimony in Jerusalem he affirms precisely what God was doing: *"God gave the Gentiles the same gift as He gave us when we believed on Jesus. So, who was I to withstand God's instructions to go to them (men) to preach.*
- h) The vision was always about men, not animals!
- (h) Eating meat sacrificed to idols: more lessons on causing your **weak** brother to stumble!
- 1. **"Now concerning things offered to idols:** We know that we all have knowledge. Knowledge puffs up, but love edifies. And if anyone thinks that he knows anything, he knows nothing yet as he ought to know. But if anyone loves God, this one is known by Him. **Therefore concerning the eating of things offered to idols, we know that an idol is nothing** in the world, and that there is no other God but one. For even if there are so-called gods, whether in heaven or on earth (as there are many gods and many Lords), yet

for us there is one God, the Father, of whom are all things, and we for Him; and one Lord Jesus Christ, through whom are all things, and through whom we live. **However, there is not in everyone that knowledge;** for some, with consciousness of the idol, until now **eat it as a thing offered to an idol;** and **their conscience, being weak,** is defiled. But food does not commend us to God; for neither if we eat are we the better, nor if we do not eat are we the worse. **But beware lest somehow this liberty of yours become a stumbling block to those who are weak.** For if anyone **sees you** who have knowledge **eating in an idol's temple, will not the conscience of him who is weak be emboldened to eat those things offered to idols?** And because of your knowledge shall the weak brother perish, for whom Christ died? But **when you thus sin against the brethren, and wound their weak conscience, you sin against Christ.** Therefore, **if food makes my brother stumble, I will never again eat meat, lest I make my brother stumble."** I Corinthians 8:1-13 NKJV

2. Beware lest somehow this liberty of yours become a stumbling block to those who are weak.

- a) It's a simple concept. Those who have knowledge know that an idol is NOTHING.
- b) If meat was sacrificed to an idol; it was sacrificed to nothing, so it's perfectly fine to eat it (as long as it's a clean meat to begin with).
- c) However, if a brother weak in the faith, like we saw in Romans 14, a believer unknowledgeable in what the Word of God says, witnesses your liberty to partake of such meat, and also participates in eating, but is then guilt-ridden and his weak conscience is wounded, that is on you.
- d) The bottom line is this: you are better off NEVER eating meat again, rather than allowing your liberty, which comes from knowledge, to hurt another Christian.
- e) Knowledge like that puffs up, but love edifies.

CIRCUMCISION OF THE HEART

2. Circumcision and Uncircumcision

A. Circumcision is Profitable

- (1) A sign, but just one of many laws.
 - (a) Every male child shall be circumcised as a sign of the covenant!

1. **“This is My covenant** which you shall keep, between Me and you and your descendants after you: **Every male child among you shall be circumcised;** and you shall be circumcised in the flesh of your foreskins, and **it shall be a sign of the covenant between Me and you.”** Genesis 17:10-11 NKJV
- (b) Circumcision is a great sign, but not if you ignore the rest of God’s commands.
 1. **“For circumcision is indeed profitable if you keep the law;** but if you are a breaker of the law, **your circumcision has become uncircumcision.”** Romans 2:25 NKJV
 2. If you are physically circumcised and you are habitually disobedient to God, He will overlook the physical “reality” and see you as uncircumcised!
 - a) If you are just going to violate God’s other commands all over the place, what good is it?
 - b) You might as well be uncircumcised because in God’s eyes your physical circumcision has become irrelevant.
- (c) Uncircumcision can be counted as circumcision!
 1. **“Therefore, if an uncircumcised man keeps the righteous requirements of the law, will not his**

uncircumcision be counted as circumcision?"

Romans 2:26 NKJV

2. If you are physically uncircumcised and you are habitually obedient to God, He will overlook the physical "reality" and see you as circumcised!
 - a) Think about circumcision as the perfect object lesson. Jews strictly adhere to the practice of circumcision, as a sign of their covenant with God.
 - b) It's obviously beneficial if you take it seriously, meaning you do it because it is an outward act of obedience.
 - c) A man raised without God's commands, who comes to love and obey His instructions by faith, who begins to live in obedience to God organically, is literally viewed by God as if he is circumcised!
 - d) An uncircumcised former Gentile who takes their obedience seriously, is considered to have a circumcised heart (as we saw earlier in the chapter).
 - 1) *"for when Gentiles, who do not have the law, by nature do the things in the law, these, although not having the law, are a law to themselves, **who***

show the work of the law written in their hearts...” Romans 2:14-15 NKJV

(d) The obedient one becomes the judge, not the physically circumcised one!

1. “And will not the **physically uncircumcised**, if he **fulfills the law, judge you** who, **even with your written code and circumcision**, are a **transgressor of the law?**” Romans 2:27 NKJV

2. Obedience vs. Transgression

a) The obedient former Gentile becomes the one evaluating the behavior of those raised under the strict guidelines of the law, who habitually transgress it.

B. Circumcision of the Heart

(1) Outward vs. Inward

(a) A True Jew

1. “For he is **not a Jew who is one outwardly, nor is circumcision that which is outward in the flesh; but he is a Jew who is one inwardly; and circumcision is that of the heart, in the Spirit, not in the letter**; whose praise is not from men but from God.”

Romans 2:28-29 NKJV

2. True Circumcision

- a) We can summarize this entire upside-down situation like this: physical circumcision, which has become synonymous with being a Jew, is not what truly makes someone a Jew. It's only a particular sign and that gets completely negated if you live an otherwise disobedient lifestyle.
- b) Conversely, and regardless of your "original heritage", if you have become empowered by God and you live a life of obedience and submission to Him, it is considered by God that you are indeed circumcised, but not outwardly in the flesh.
- c) Instead, it is your inner man, your heart that is circumcised unto the Lord. It's all about the Holy Spirit first, not a list of commands.
- d) Obedience to God's commands has become a natural consequence of God's grace; it is inspired and empowered by the Almighty Himself. At that point, what man thinks is irrelevant because God is the One who will acknowledge your standing in His eyes.
- e) What is most critical to recognize, however, is that obedience to the Law is a matter of the heart. Your motivation, intention, inspiration, and what

empowers your obedience is what is most important. That does not discount the value of actually obeying God's commands; it just emphasizes that how and why you obey matters more.

3. What is Paul really saying?

- a) It's all a matter of the heart. In other words, your motivation, intention, inspiration, and what empowers your obedience is what really counts. That does not discount what you must be obedient to, just how you accomplish or fulfill it.

4. What would Jesus do (WWJD)?

- a) *“Do not think that I came to destroy the Law or the Prophets. **I did not come to destroy but to FULFILL.** For assuredly, I say to you, till heaven and earth pass away, one jot or one tittle will by no means pass from the law till all is fulfilled.”*

Matthew 5:17-18 NKJV

- b) Fulfill means fully preach, fully demonstrate, or fill to the fullest. With a circumcised heart, you too can do what Jesus did. The result is obedience to God's commands, yet the credit for your capability

goes to Y'shua's work on the cross and not your own abilities.

5. Let's review...

- a) Paul says, "Let's use circumcision as an example." If you are physically circumcised, which is a commandment, and yet openly neglect other laws, it's as if in Yahweh's eyes you are not circumcised at all.
- b) On the contrary, if you are not circumcised, yet still keep His commandments with faith based strength, it is as if you are circumcised in Yahweh's eyes.
- c) The circumcised heart is what Yahweh is looking for. That is not a new idea; it has always been the case and that is the point Paul is making. He is teaching what is consistent with the writings of Moses as first introduced to us.
 - 1) *"Therefore **circumcise the foreskin of your heart**, and be stiff-necked no longer."*
Deuteronomy 10:16 NKJV
- d) Moses originally taught the truth about the circumcised heart; the only way Yahweh's

commands would not be too difficult to obey was after He changed our hearts.

- 1) ***“And the LORD your God will circumcise your heart and the heart of your descendants, to love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul, that you may live.”***

Deuteronomy 30:6 NKJV

- e) We will go into much more detail on this in our Romans 10 commentary; stay tuned.
- f) And even Jeremiah the Prophet expounded on the same truth when he told us about the soil of our hearts.

- 1) ***“Break up your fallow ground, and do not sow among thorns. Circumcise yourselves to the LORD, and take away the foreskins of your hearts.”*** Jeremiah 4:3-4 NKJV

- g) No doubt Yahshua was referring to this very prophecy as he taught the Parable of the Soils in Matthew 13:1-23 (thorns vv. 7, 22).

- h) What is the outcome of a circumcised heart?

- 1) ***“I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit within you; I will take the heart of stone out of your flesh and give you a heart of flesh. I***

will put My Spirit within you and cause you TO WALK IN MY STATUTES, AND YOU WILL KEEP MY JUDGMENTS AND DO THEM.” Ezekiel 36:26-27 NKJV

6. Hold this high concept in mind. Paul is not teaching anything that is not completely consistent with the writings of Moses. Your discipleship training is really rulership training for God’s kingdom, and leadership training for your personal development. You are supposed to learn how to apply the power of God’s grace toward His divine instructions: spiritual practices, lifestyle laws, and even the physical laws of the universe. To do so you should practice implementing grace-empowered obedience right now, here on earth, during this life. That is what will insert the government of heaven into everything you do; that is what will bring the kingdom of heaven to earth. *“Your kingdom come. Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven.” (Matthew 6:10)*

C. Final Words on Circumcision

- (1) To circumcise or not to circumcise?
 - (a) Timothy had a Jewish mother and Greek father and was not circumcised as a child. Paul had him circumcised

because he was taking him into a region with Jews that knew his father was Greek.

1. “Then he came to Derbe and Lystra. And behold, a certain disciple was there, named **Timothy**, the son of a certain **Jewish woman who believed, but his father was Greek**. He was well spoken of by the brethren who were at Lystra and Iconium. **Paul wanted to have him go on with him. And he took him and circumcised him because of the Jews who were in that region, for they all knew that his father was Greek**. And as they went through the cities, they **delivered to them the decrees to keep, which were determined by the apostles and elders at Jerusalem**. So the **churches were strengthened in the faith**, and increased in number daily.” Acts 16:1-5 NKJV

2. Why did Paul see this as important?
 - a) In what is a completely ironic twist, we first must remember what decrees the apostles and elders at Jerusalem charged Paul to deliver.
 - b) Paul was Jerusalem a chapter earlier because of a controversy with certain men over this very topic.
 - 1) “*And certain men came down from Judea and taught the brethren, “**Unless you are***

*circumcised according to the custom of Moses, you cannot be saved.” Therefore, when Paul and Barnabas **had no small dissension and dispute with them**, they determined that Paul and Barnabas and certain others of them should **go up to Jerusalem, to the apostles and elders, about this question.**” Acts 15:1-2 NKJV*

c) Others rose up during the presentation and made it even worse.

1) *“But some of the sect of the Pharisees who believed rose up, saying, **“It is necessary to circumcise them, and to command them to keep the law of Moses.”**”* Acts 15:5 NKJV

d) In the end the ruling for Gentiles who were coming into the faith was this:

1) *“Therefore I judge that **we should not trouble those from among the Gentiles** who are turning to God, but that we write to them to **abstain from things polluted by idols, from sexual immorality, from things strangled, and from blood.** For Moses has had throughout many generations those who preach him in every city,*

being read in the synagogues every Sabbath.””

Acts 15:19-21 NKJV

- e) The controversy that was ruled on at the Jerusalem Council was inspired by earlier events in Galatia.
- f) A question that began about circumcision, ended with a ruling for Gentiles to begin their journey of faith by adhering to three categories of commands.
 - 1) No Idolatry
 - 2) No Sexual Immorality
 - 3) Eat Clean Food
- g) Besides, they can learn the rest of the law, over time, while attending synagogue. The words of Moses are read and preached about every Sabbath; it's been going on for generations.
- h) As always, you should be reminded that there are NO CONDITIONS for salvation other than "By grace through faith you are saved." (Ephesians 2:8-10).
- i) And yes, on the very journey Paul took to deliver this ruling, he met Timothy in Derbe and Lystra and wished for him to join the mission. So, he had him circumcised.

- j) Why? For the same reason we have been saying all along. Don't do anything to cause you brother to stumble! There were Jews in the region to which they were traveling, who knew Timothy's father, and Paul did not want anything to prevent them from receiving the message. Plain and simple.
- k) As far as circumcision, sure it's a good thing, but offers nothing with regards to your born-again status. As a general rule, if you come into the faith uncircumcised, stay that way! Timothy was just an exception for reason just explained.

1) ***“Circumcision is nothing and uncircumcision is nothing, but keeping the commandments of God is what matters. Let each one remain in the same calling in which he was called.”*** †

Corinthians 7:19-20 NKJV

(b) And yet when it came to Titus in Galatia, Paul made the opposite decision as he did with Timothy!

1. **“Yet not even Titus who was with me, being a Greek, was compelled to be circumcised. And this occurred because of false brethren secretly brought in (who came in by stealth to spy out our liberty which we have in Christ Jesus, that they might bring us into**

bondage), to whom **we did not yield submission** even for an hour, that the truth of the gospel might continue with you." Galatians 2:3-5 NKJV

2. Why?

a) What liberty was at stake, what was the controversy!

1) *"And certain men came down from Judea and taught the brethren, "**Unless you are circumcised** according to the custom of Moses, **you cannot be saved.**"*" Acts 15:1 NKJV

b) Paul would allow none of that bondage on His watch. So NO CIRCUMCISION for Titus! Why?

c) Again, to put no stumbling block before a brother!

(c) So therefore!

1. "Stand fast therefore in the liberty by which Christ has made us free, and do **not be entangled again with a yoke of bondage**. Indeed I, Paul, say to you that **if you become circumcised, Christ will profit you nothing**. And I testify again to **every man who becomes circumcised that he is a debtor to keep the whole law**. You have **become estranged from Christ, you who attempt to be justified by law; you have fallen from grace**. For we through the Spirit eagerly

wait for the hope of righteousness by faith. For in Christ Jesus **neither circumcision nor uncircumcision avails anything, but faith working through love.**"

Galatians 5:1-6 NKJV

2. Here is the general rule which is completely consistent with Paul message in Romans 2:25-29!
 - a) If you become circumcised **to be saved**, Christ will profit you nothing.
 - b) Every man who is circumcised **to be saved** becomes a debtor to keep the whole law.
 - c) If you believe you are justified by law; grace is unnecessary. (*By works of law no flesh will be justified, Romans 3:20, See: [Vernacular](#)*)
 - d) **To be saved** in Christ Jesus, neither circumcision nor uncircumcision avails anything; it's all about God's love for us and His grace through faith!

(d) Circumcision Reimagined!

1. **"For he is not a Jew who is one outwardly, nor is circumcision that which is outward in the flesh; but he is a Jew who is one inwardly; and circumcision is that of the heart..."** Romans 2:28-29
2. Final word! Do we get rid of circumcision! NO!

- a) **“What advantage then has the Jew, or what is the profit of circumcision? Much in every way!**

Chiefly because to them were committed the oracles of God.” Romans 3:1-2 NKJV

- b) Just don't think **circumcision** will save you!

Summary: A PAPER TIGER

1. The Excellence of God's Law

A. Proper Understanding of the Law

(1) Approving Excellent Things

- (a) Indeed you are called a Jew, and rest on the law...

1. Rest in the law, instructed out of the law, the form of knowledge and truth in the law, so...

- a) If you are a **Jew**, you **rest on the law...**

- 1) Presently, many who come to Y'shua from the Jewish faith should have an advantage, having been raised in a biblical law-based culture.

- 2) The Jews in the first century were comprised mostly of those whose heritage was from the tribes of Judah, Levi, and half of Benjamin.

Those were the tribes that made up the Southern Kingdom of Israel before they were scattered in the exile to Babylon. They had come back into

the land of Israel. The Northern Kingdom remains in exile, even to this very day. Scholars believe they eventually occupied Northern and Western Europe, whose people eventually scattered across the globe. The word British literally means “Covenant Man” in Hebrew. {brit = covenant} {ish = man}

- 3) The law is their firm foundation; they say they are anchored to God’s commands.
- 4) Their culture and communities were built around God’s laws (the Torah), and the Tabernacle/Temple service.
- 5) The Torah is the equivalent to the US Constitution (a founding document by which all other laws are based and must be consistent.)

b) You **boast in God**.

- 1) The mere fact that they have been guided by and held strict adherence to the law, in their own minds, is a form of open praise to Yahweh.
- 2) We worship the One True God!

c) You **know His will**.

- 1) Those who have been instructed from the Torah, traditionally the Jews, by inference practice

what is, “the excellent and superior way of life,” and by extension say, “they know God’s will.”

- 2) Someday in the millennial kingdom, Christians will rule and reign as overseers with Christ within God’s governmental system, which naturally uses His laws as the framework for a well-functioning and healthy society.
 - 3) So, it must stand to reason that being well-versed in the grace-empowered administration of God’s commands is necessary. (See: [From Faith to Faith](#))
 - 4) Know His law; know His will: They revel in the idea that they know the will of the Father.
- d) What is the will of the Father?
- 1) Certainly, knowing His Word (Oracles) is going to give you a distinct advantage!
- e) Please watch the intro to [Vernacular](#). In it, Pastor Manny said: *“You don’t find the will of God for your life; the will of Gods finds you!”* But how?
- 1) **Present** (an action) your life to God; **Avoid** (an action) being like the pagans; **Transform** (an action) your way of thinking; so you can **Prove**

(an action) that God's will for your life **already exists!**

- f) You approve the **things that are excellent.**
 - 1) To outwardly align with what is superior, by deriving your values and standards from God's laws.
- g) You are confident you can **guide the blind, be a light to those who are in darkness, and an instructor to the foolish!**
 - 1) Those who have a proper understanding of the law have an opportunity to become teachers and mentors to those who have come to faith in Christ from a pagan world.
 - 2) They should consider these souls like silly lost children and should take on the roles of teacher and mentor, and should start at the most rudimentary level. Why should they take on this responsibility?
 - 3) Faithful Jews have the upbringing, background, and previous knowledge to open spiritually blind eyes, to shed a burst of bright light, which dispels darkness and restores sight. They can

teach those who know so little, mentoring the young and immature in the faith.

- 4) Naturally, they should feel confident they can serve in this leadership position, directing the path of those who were not raised with God's laws.

h) You have **the form of knowledge and truth in the law**.

- 1) They believe that knowing God's law has given them a brand of wisdom and insight into the most important truths.
- 2) The Jews who become Christians start off with a clear advantage according to Paul.
- 3) They have been raised with the knowledge of truth of God's instructions.
- 4) However, many of them have only a "**form** of knowledge and truth" and their version of the law is quite tainted! More on that a little later.
- 5) First let's take an in-depth look at how we should all view God's commandments.

B. Proper Application of the Law

(1) Words of Divine Revelation

- (a) Write a copy of this law in a book...

1. Why do kings need to KNOW THE LAW?
 - a) Ultimately it matters not if you started out as a Jew or Gentile. Any ruler must become adept at the proper administration of the laws of his kingdom.
 - b) It is no different for those who intend to be part of the ruling class in Yahweh's eternal Kingdom.
 - c) Those who will rule and reign with Christ must be well-versed in grace empowered administration of God's commands.
 - d) Even the ancient Kings of Israel were commanded to inscribe a complete Torah in their own hand and to study it daily, as training to rule well.
 - e) Understanding the proper application of God's law will dramatically improve the potential for those who are disciplined by it.
 - f) So, **be with it** and **read it all the days of your life!**
2. How and why would you study God's law?
 - a) To practice obeying it and to be blessed!
 - b) To learn to fear the Lord!
 - c) To protect your heart from pride!
 - d) To never turn away from God's commands; to use them to rule well!
 - e) To live long and prosper.

- f) To raise a successful family.

C. Proper Perspective of the Law

- (1) Instead of ridiculing God's laws, magnify them!
 - (a) Blessed is the man who delights in God's law...
 - (b) A small sample of the 176 verses of Psalm 119...
 - 1. And that's just the first six of 176 verses...
 - a) Throughout the Psalms, we share in David's life and experiences. We see his authentic repentance, his spirit of praise and worship, his childlike faith that God would protect him, and his belief that God would avenge him and set him on high in the midst of all his enemies. And, in David's worship, we witness his profound love for God's Laws.
 - b) From his heart, David wrote the longest chapter in the Bible. All 176 verses of Psalm 119 give honor to the LORD in all His ways and pay tribute to the beauty of His Law.
 - c) On this subject, I am compelled to borrow notes from *Matthew Henry*, an 18th century Christian biblical scholar and author of the voluminous commentary which bears his name.

- 1) *“The general scope and design of it is to **magnify the Law, and make it honourable**; to set forth **the excellency and usefulness of divine revelation**, and to recommend it to us, not only for the entertainment, but **for the government, of ourselves**, by the psalmist’s [King David] own example, who speaks by experience of **the benefit of it**, and of the **good impressions made upon him by it**, for which he praises God, and earnestly prays, from first to last, **for the continuance of God’s grace with him, to direct and quicken him in the way of his duty.**”*

Matthew Henry ~circa 1710

- d) I am quickly reminded of Pauls words when I read the words of Mr. Henry...*“the **continuance of God’s grace** with him, to direct and quicken him in the way of his duty.”*
- e) The ongoing access to God’s grace empowers our lives as Christians, but for what? Divine revelation for the governance of ourselves! To obey his every command, so our lives reflect His glory!
- f) *Matthew Henry* (like Paul) understood the immense advantage of using God’s Laws as the

fibers to weave together the moral, economic, and political fabric of our individual lives and society.

g) ⁽¹⁾As the Body of Christ, it is our duty to establish governance using God's Law, if we hope to reap the immeasurable benefits of living under God's government.

a) ⁽¹⁾See **Section D** below: A New System of Government (for self and society)

h) Throughout the 176 verses of Psalm 119, David confesses to the goodness and value of God's Laws. Keep in mind, David is a man whose heart exemplifies the heart of God. We would be wise to emulate his example. To capture the diverse essence of the God's instructions (the Torah), David uses ten different words with identical meaning to characterize the expression of God's will. The Law is called His: way, testimonies, commandments, precepts, word, judgments, righteousness, statutes, truth, and in verse 132, he even calls it His name!

(c) The Apostle Paul confirms that it is through the Law that God reveals His will (which is right where we began today).

a) Again, let us turn to *Matthew Henry* who expresses it so well. He wrote this in the early 1700's. What excuse can we possibly fabricate today, as Christians, to defend our ignorance of the Law?

1) *"There are **ten different words** by which **divine revelation** is called in this psalm, and they are synonymous, each of them expressive of the whole compass of it (both that which tells us **what God expects from us and that which tells us that we may expect from Him**) and of the system of religion which is founded upon it and guided by it."*

2) Matthew Henry refers to God's Laws as divine revelation; in other words, **His will for our lives, "both what He expects from us and what we can expect from Him."** Why would anyone wish to abolish God's Law?

b) He continues...and could it be any more convicting!

1) *"The great esteem and affection David had for the word of God is the more admirable considering **how little he had of it**, in*

*comparison with what we have, no more perhaps in writing than the first books of Moses, which were but the dawning of this day, **which may shame us** who enjoy the full discoveries of divine revelation and yet are **so cold towards it.**"*

- c) **Divine revelation:** His will for our lives, "both what He expects from us and what we can expect from Him."

D. (1)A New System of Government (for self and society)

- (1) Someday in the Millennial Kingdom, we will rule and reign with Christ inside God's governmental systems (Revelation 20:4).
 - (a) And His kingdom will never end... See [Caught Up Together](#) to learn more about the rapture and the Millennial Kingdom.
- (2) One day we will be the administrators of God's Laws
 - (a) As the Body of Christ, it is our duty to establish governance using God's Law, even now!
 - 1. There will be no end to God's governance!
 - a) Wouldn't it be prudent to develop a duplicatable system that institutes God's laws in a fresh new way?

- b) It must be inspired and empowered by God's grace, not the same system that, in many ways, blinded Jews from recognizing Y'shua.

(3) Inspired and Ordered Governance

- (a) This application of God's Word (Laws) will work for individuals, marriages, families, communities, organizations, and governments!

1. Commentary:

- a) Everything begins with the gift of faith. Without God's grace birthing faith to believe, we would all remain in our ignorance as lost souls. But we believe and are made righteous by God to then live by faith, to practice our faith. Faith is the foundation of EVERYTHING as a Christian! And thus, every problem, question, dilemma, decision, conflict...every thought, should be filtered through your faith. Faith is the place-holder for everything. Put you current circumstance in the position where faith sits and then go on this journey!
- b) We begin by doing what David did, learn God's ways and mediate on them day and night. Seek the Lord's voice and His heart, His moral standards on every matter before you make your first move. His

sheep hear His voice (John 10:27), so you need not doubt He will speak and you can hear. This is the only version of **virtue** that matters. Always ask, *“What does God think about this?”*

- c) Then seek **knowledge**. God has spoken but that does not mean you have all the information you need, all the facts and data. There is often a knowledge gap between God’s directives and your ability to fulfill those directives. So, fill in the gap by seeking what you need to know to do what God is telling you to do. Consult godly people and research what you must know before you take action.
- d) And yes, doing what you are told to do is critical. You can’t just think about it. **Self-control** is that character trait that allows you to either do what you should do, or not do what you shouldn’t! But taking action before you hear God’s voice, know His heart, or while you still remain ignorant is a disaster waiting to happen. However, when you have walked diligently through these steps, not taking action might even be a worse disaster. And once you begin to take action, ask this question:

“How long should I continue doing what I’m supposed to do?” That should be an easy one! “As long as it takes!”

- e) And that is why following your demonstration of self-control, the action step, you must be steadfast until you have your breakthrough. **Perseverance** is permanent self-control. Don’t quit; don’t stop; don’t surrender; don’t grow weary in doing good; your breakthrough is coming (Galatians 6:9). Sometimes there is a delay in achieving your desired outcome because life is filled with tests and trials. God loves giving tests! So, persevere through the trials; your victory awaits!
- f) I say this with one asterisk next to perseverance.
 - 1) ***Humility:** if you are not getting the results you expect when you’ve gone from faith to virtue to knowledge to self-control and you have been grinding out perseverance, be humble enough to go back and “check your work.” Maybe you made a mistake; maybe you missed God’s voice; maybe you heard what you wanted to hear; maybe you didn’t gather all the information you need, etc. The bottom line is this. Rewind and

review if you've made an error. It happens! If not, press on! If so, correct and press on!

- g) These first four steps built on faith is the "stuff of life." Everyday, all day, at all times, apply and reapply in THIS ORDER: **Virtue, Knowledge, Self-control, and Perseverance** to everything. Don't skip steps and don't change the order! If you do you are assured of mistakes. These are where the "rubber hits the road" in daily living. They are the working steps that yield an outcome.
- h) And that is why **Godliness** is next. We can cut right through the thickets and avoid all sorts of super-spiritual definitions of Godliness and define it like this. *"Godliness is wholistic integrity."* Integrity is an architectural term that simply means the building materials are being utilized within the greatest strengths and tolerances of their natural properties. There is perfect alignment between functional properties and use! Cables work great to suspend things from above; concrete works great to support things from below. Use one in place of the other and your bridge will collapse! For us, wholistic integrity simply means that every aspect

of your life, as a wholistic being (spirit, soul and body), is in alignment with how and why God made you! That's Godliness. And there are a myriad of subcategories under each aspect.

i) There is also an important asterisk with Godliness.

1) *Godliness is not perfection. The Bible teaches that you are to "...exercise yourself toward godliness." (I Timothy 4:7). As long as you are authentic and your heart and intentions are to apply and reapply Virtue, Knowledge, Self-control, and Perseverance in order, to everything in every aspect of your life, that is Godliness!

j) Yet, Godliness is not just meant for your own benefit and that is why you get to share it with everyone around you. And that is why **brotherly kindness** naturally follows. This is the mutual affectionation you share with your fellow humans, and you can do it effectively because you are deeply dedicated to practicing godliness in every arena of life! Again this is an outcome of the continual day-to-day application of **Faith, Virtue, Knowledge, Self-control, and Perseverance.**

- k) And finally, can you imagine what a man would look like if he was able to do this all day everyday for everyone? He would look like Y'shua. And that is why the culmination of perfect governance is love! "*God is love.*" (1 John 4:7) For this there is no asterisk. It is who we are called to be like and that is why **we are diligent to add to our faith**, not just rest in our secured eternity!
- l) Yet, there remains this potential problem that we identified earlier...a FORM of knowledge...
- m) And now we have the remedy; do this and you will never be short of knowledge!
 - 1) Add to your faith virtue, knowledge, self-control, perseverance, godliness, brotherly kindness, and love.
 - 2) *For **if these things are yours you will have knowledge!***

E. Wrong Application of the Law

- (1) Are you listening to yourself? Do you hear your own words?
 - (a) A paper tiger?

1. A paper tiger is a euphemism used to describe what outwardly appears powerful, but inwardly is weak or ineffectual.
 - a) **Outwardly:** you depend on the law; praise God; walk in His will; affirm that His instructions are superior; certain you can guide pagans by shedding light into darkness; instruct the lost; and teach new converts.
 - b) **Inwardly:** You instruct others but don't follow your own teaching and preaching.
 - 1) Hypocrisy: when the outer man is not integrity with inner man, or vice versa.
 - 2) See [Hypocratisudes](#) for a detailed teaching on Matthew 23 and hypocrisy.
 - c) There is a scathing rebuke of such presumptive leaders if they are not walking their talk, not living in submission to the very commands they claim are so vital. In other words, do you practice what you preach? Do you follow you own advice?
 - d) In Romans 14, Paul distinguishes those who are weak in the faith from those who are strong. You will notice that there is immense value in a **proper understanding, proper application, and proper**

perspective of the Law of God, and not just for the Kings, as described in Deuteronomy 17:18-20.

e) Those coming from Israel into faith in Y'shua have the initial calling and opportunity to be teachers and mentors to those who come in from the pagan world, simply because they have the upbringing to do so.

1) If you are versed in the Torah you would know precisely to what Paul is referring in Romans 14:1-3, and it's not likely what the modern-day Christian has been taught.

2) More on this later in **Section F** below:

(2) Misrepresenting the Faith.

(b) I hate sin, but I love my sin!

1. Adultery and Idolatry

a) It is clear that God's law speaks harshly against things like theft, adulterous behavior, and idolatry. But worse than all of those, in a sense, is hypocrisy. It's bad enough to simply be disobedient, but it's altogether an abomination to brag about your obedience, while behind the scenes you are a complete wretch.

- b) There is little doubt that Paul purposely places adultery and idolatry side-by-side. There is likely no greater idolatrous pressure than to gratify your own sexual desires and no worse circumstance to pervert that desire than within marriage. (See: [In the Image of God](#) to see how sexually immorality is the gateway sin.)
 - c) Even the early teachings for Gentiles emphasized these laws.
- (c) You claim the law is great, yet you bring dishonor to God by violating it!
1. Please don't boast in the Law and violate it at the same time; it is a horrible witness.
 - a) To claim you represent Yahweh and then disobey Him is already bad enough.
 - b) Even worse is when believers, who come into the faith with a previous understanding of the Torah, then misrepresent the intention and application of Yahweh's commands and cause those **weaker in the faith to stumble**.
 - c) We will cover this warning about causing your brother to stumble in detail in **Section F** below:
 - (2) Misrepresenting the Faith.

(d) Tarnishing God's Name!

1. There is literally nothing more shameful, disgraceful, or blasphemous to God
 - a) It's the worst type of stain against God's reputation, especially when those raised without the knowledge of God's laws are watching..
 - 1) *My people are taken away for nothing?* All they had to do was obey God, but they refused and instead were hypocrites! As a result, God's name was tarnished in the presence of pagans.

(e) When you practice what you preach against, **God is blasphemed!** (We saw this at the start of Romans 2.)

1. See [Vernacular](#) for full teaching on Romans 2:1-16
2. The worst hypocrisy! (Romans 2:21-23)
 - a) You teach another; do you not teach yourself?
 - b) You who preach against theft, adultery, and idolatry; do you steal, fornicate, and worship idols?
 - c) You brag about the law, yet you are lawless!

F. (2)Misrepresenting the Faith

- (1) Authenticity and integrity are unnecessary! That is what you are saying when you claim to represent God, while living in habitual disobedience.

- (a) Paul leaves Timothy in Ephesus to lovingly spread good doctrine and to correct bad doctrine, which is being propagated by those who have strayed from the truth!
 - 1. Those who desire to teach the law “have a form of knowledge.”
 - a) They speak and affirm things about the law that they don’t understand or live up to.
- (b) In the last days...
 - 1. The last days can refer any of the days between Y’shua’s birth and His second coming, and in this verse it intimates a time closer to His second coming.
 - a) There is that idea again...Those who desire to teach the law “have a form of knowledge,” and in this case it’s “a form of godliness” that denies God’s grace (power).
 - b) They can try to learn forever, but without His grace they will never be able to come to the knowledge of the truth.
 - c) They will be stuck with a “form of knowledge.”
- (c) In latter times...
 - 1. Again referring to a time closer to Y’shua’s second coming—faithless men filled with hypocrisy will spread lies!

- a) These are deceiving spirits who spread doctrines of demons: Is this referring to God's laws?
 - 1) Unequivocally no!
- b) By extension, can anything that follows in this passage be referring to the laws of God?
 - 1) Unequivocally no!
- c) Deceiving spirits/doctrine of demons: forbids marriage.
 - 1) Disparaging marriage reads like an editorial or op-ed in the New York Times.
- d) You must abstain from specific foods which God created to be received with thanksgiving.
 - 1) However, You might not know what God created to be eaten as food, if you are ignorant of God's laws. (In Romans 14 they are called weak in the faith.)
- e) Those who do know what is permitted are those who confidently believe and know the truth. They have true knowledge of the law (and it's proper application), as opposed to those who have a "form of knowledge."

- f) Thus, every creature God created [for food] is good to eat, even if there are some movements out there that claim otherwise.
 - g) You can eat anything God permits, even when certain men claim you can't.
 - h) Pray and thank God for all foods that were set apart by God (sanctified in His word) as your provisions.
- (d) Hypocrisy can damage new converts. But, even worse is to misrepresent the intention and application of God's commands, and cause those weaker in the faith to stumble!
1. The one who is weak eats only vegetables. Why?
- a) They are not familiar with the law that gives them clear instructions about what is clean meat to eat.
 - b) Someone who has a clear understanding is stronger in the faith!
 - c) However, don't either of you disparage the other. If you are trained in what you can eat, don't belittle someone who is not yet trained. And if you are untrained, in your ignorance, don't voice your negative opinion about someone who has liberty to eat because of his knowledge about the law.

(e) Am I saying that eating unclean food no longer matters?

1. This can become quite confusing, so we must keep things within a biblical framework we've learned about food!

a) The short answer is NO!

b) The key here, however, is to prioritize the needs of your brother.

c) Remember the context: ***“Receive one who is weak in the faith.”***

d) Don't cause a weak brother to stumble

1) Weak = not well-versed in Scripture.

e) We, who know the truth, know there is nothing unclean of itself.

1) Context: nothing is unclean that God has called clean! (See Acts 10:28)

f) However, if someone weak in the faith believes something clean is unclean, then to him it is unclean.

1) Context: don't eat in front of him what he believes to be unclean.

g) It is not loving to exercise your liberty to eat something because you have the knowledge that it is clean, if it will cause grief for your brother.

(f) Don't let confusion over food wreck someone's faith.

1. Again, don't lose the context here. *"All things indeed are pure?"*

- a) All things pure are pure, obviously. Paul is not suddenly saying anything goes. And if he would say that about food, why not sex with your neighbor because you think you love her?
- b) What he is saying here is that, sure what God says is clean to eat is clean, but if eating it offends someone then it is evil to do so.
- c) This is not about food or wine, per se. It's about your love for a weak brother and your concern that your actions could offend him or cause him to stumble (even if what you are eating or drinking is permitted by God).
- d) Your faith should protect you from exercising your right to eat when it might confuse someone else.
- e) Conversely, someone who has doubts about the food he's about to consume, condemns himself if he eats because he is violating his faith, his own conscience, and whatever is not from faith is sin.

- f) And there is not a better place to be reminded of context than Peter's vision with the unclean animals on the blanket.
- (g) Peter's Vision and Subsequent Ministry: Acts 10:9-11:18
 - 1. Let's dial this in once and for all...
 - a) Peter is going to be called to preach to the Gentiles and God knows he won't want to do it!
 - b) God orchestrates an elaborate plan between Simon, Peter and Cornelius to open Peter's heart.
 - c) He presents Peter unclean animals on blanket three times in a vision and all three times, after he instructed to eat, he refuses because the food is unclean.
 - d) God tells him each time that what He has cleansed, Peter should not call common. This could be misconstrued to believe God has ended His dietary laws for Christians, however....
 - e) When Peter tell his testimony in Cornelius' house, he gives us God's interpretation of the vision (so you need not make it up): ***"God has shown me that I should not call any man common or unclean."***

- f) Why do Christians still insist that the vision was about food when we have the exact interpretation, in writing, immediately afterwards?
- g) Then, when Peter tells his testimony in Jerusalem he affirms precisely what God was doing: *“God gave the Gentiles the same gift as He gave us when we believed on Jesus. So, who was I to withstand God’s instructions to go to them (men) to preach.*
- h) The vision was always about men, not animals!
- (h) Eating meat sacrificed to idols: more lessons on causing your **weak** brother to stumble!
- 1. Beware lest somehow this liberty of yours become a stumbling block to those who are weak.
 - a) It’s a simple concept. Those who have knowledge know that an idol is NOTHING.
 - b) If meat was sacrificed to an idol; it was sacrificed to nothing, so it’s perfectly fine to eat it (as long as it’s a clean meat to begin with).
 - c) However, if a brother weak in the faith, like we saw in Romans 14, a believer unknowledgeable in what the Word of God says, witnesses your liberty to partake of such meat, and also participates in

eating, but is then guilt-ridden and his weak conscience is wounded, that is on you.

- d) The bottom line is this: you are better off NEVER eating meat again, rather than allowing your liberty, which comes from knowledge, to hurt another Christian.
- e) Knowledge like that puffs up, but love edifies.

Summary: CIRCUMCISION OF THE HEART

2. Circumcision and Uncircumcision

A. Circumcision is Profitable

- (1) A sign, but just one of many laws.
 - (a) Every male child shall be circumcised as a sign of the covenant!
 - (b) Circumcision is a great sign, but not if you ignore the rest of God's commands.
- 1. If you are physically circumcised and you are habitually disobedient to God, He will overlook the physical "reality" and see you as uncircumcised!
 - a) If you are just going to violate God's other commands all over the place, what good is it?

- b) You might as well be uncircumcised because in God's eyes your physical circumcision has become irrelevant.
- (c) Uncircumcision can be counted as circumcision!
 - 1. If you are physically uncircumcised and you are habitually obedient to God, He will overlook the physical "reality" and see you as circumcised!
 - a) Think about circumcision as the perfect object lesson. Jews strictly adhere to the practice of circumcision, as a sign of their covenant with God.
 - b) It's obviously beneficial if you take it seriously, meaning you do it because it is an outward act of obedience.
 - c) A man raised without God's commands, who comes to love and obey His instructions by faith, who begins to live in obedience to God organically, is literally viewed by God as if he is circumcised!
 - d) An uncircumcised former Gentile who takes their obedience seriously, is considered to have a circumcised heart (as we saw earlier in the chapter).

(d) The obedient one becomes the judge, not the physically circumcised one!

1. Obedience vs. Transgression

- a) The obedient former Gentile becomes the one evaluating the behavior of those raised under the strict guidelines of the law, who habitually transgress it.

B. Circumcision of the Heart

(1) Outward vs. Inward

(a) A True Jew

1. True Circumcision

- a) We can summarize this entire upside-down situation like this: physical circumcision, which has become synonymous with being a Jew, is not what truly makes someone a Jew. It's only a particular sign and that gets completely negated if you live an otherwise disobedient lifestyle.
- b) Conversely, and regardless of your "original heritage", if you have become empowered by God and you live a life of obedience and submission to Him, it is considered by God that you are indeed circumcised, but not outwardly in the flesh.

- c) Instead, it is your inner man, your heart that is circumcised unto the Lord. It's all about the Holy Spirit first, not a list of commands.
- d) Obedience to God's commands has become a natural consequence of God's grace; it is inspired and empowered by the Almighty Himself. At that point, what man thinks is irrelevant because God is the One who will acknowledge your standing in His eyes.
- e) What is most critical to recognize, however, is that obedience to the Law is a matter of the heart. Your motivation, intention, inspiration, and what empowers your obedience is what is most important. That does not discount the value of actually obeying God's commands; it just emphasizes that how and why you obey matters more.

2. What is Paul really saying?

- a) It's all a matter of the heart. In other words, your motivation, intention, inspiration, and what empowers your obedience is what really counts. That does not discount what you must be obedient to, just how you accomplish or fulfill it.

3. What would Jesus do (WWJD)?

- a) Fulfill means fully preach, fully demonstrate, or fill to the fullest. With a circumcised heart, you too can do what Jesus did. The result is obedience to God's commands, yet the credit for your capability goes to Y'shua's work on the cross and not your own abilities.

4. Let's review...

- a) Paul says, "Let's use circumcision as an example." If you are physically circumcised, which is a commandment, and yet openly neglect other laws, it's as if in Yahweh's eyes you are not circumcised at all.
- b) On the contrary, if you are not circumcised, yet still keep His commandments with faith based strength, it is as if you are circumcised in Yahweh's eyes.
- c) The circumcised heart is what Yahweh is looking for. That is not a new idea; it has always been the case and that is the point Paul is making. He is teaching what is consistent with the writings of Moses as first introduced to us.

- d) Moses originally taught the truth about the circumcised heart; the only way Yahweh's commands would not be too difficult to obey was after He changed our hearts.
 - e) We will go into much more detail on this in our Romans 10 commentary; stay tuned.
 - f) And even Jeremiah the Prophet expounded on the same truth when he told us about the soil of our hearts.
 - g) No doubt Yahshua was referring to this very prophecy as he taught the Parable of the Soils in Matthew 13:1-23 (thorns vv. 7, 22).
 - h) What is the outcome of a circumcised heart?
5. Hold this high concept in mind. Paul is not teaching anything that is not completely consistent with the writings of Moses. Your discipleship training is really rulership training for God's kingdom, and leadership training for your personal development. You are supposed to learn how to apply the power of God's grace toward His divine instructions: spiritual practices, lifestyle laws, and even the physical laws of the universe. To do so you should practice implementing grace-empowered obedience right

now, here on earth, during this life. That is what will insert the government of heaven into everything you do; that is what will bring the kingdom of heaven to earth. *“Your kingdom come. Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven.” (Matthew 6:10)*

C. Final Words on Circumcision

(1) To circumcise or not to circumcise?

(a) Timothy had a Jewish mother and Greek father and was not circumcised as a child. Paul had him circumcised because he was taking him into a region with Jews that knew his father was Greek.

1. Why did Paul see this as important?

a) In what is a completely ironic twist, we first must remember what decrees the apostles and elders at Jerusalem charged Paul to deliver.

b) Paul was Jerusalem a chapter earlier because of a controversy with certain men over this very topic.

c) Others rose up during the presentation and made it even worse.

d) In the end the ruling for Gentiles who were coming into the faith was this:

e) The controversy that was ruled on at the Jerusalem Council was inspired by earlier events in Galatia.

- f) A question that began about circumcision, ended with a ruling for Gentiles to begin their journey of faith by adhering to three categories of commands.
 - 1) No Idolatry
 - 2) No Sexual Immorality
 - 3) Eat Clean Food
- g) Besides, they can learn the rest of the law, over time, while attending synagogue. The words of Moses are read and preached about every Sabbath; it's been going on for generations.
- h) As always, you should be reminded that there are NO CONDITIONS for salvation other than "By grace through faith you are saved." (Ephesians 2:8-10).
- i) And yes, on the very journey Paul took to deliver this ruling, he met Timothy in Derbe and Lystra and wished for him to join the mission. So, he had him circumcised.
- j) Why? For the same reason we have been saying all along. Don't do anything to cause your brother to stumble! There were Jews in the region to which they were traveling, who knew Timothy's father,

and Paul did not want anything to prevent them from receiving the message. Plain and simple.

- k) As far as circumcision, sure it's a good thing, but offers nothing with regards to your born-again status. As a general rule, if you come into the faith uncircumcised, stay that way! Timothy was just an exception for reason just explained.
- (b) And yet when it came to Titus in Galatia, Paul made the opposite decision as he did with Timothy!

1. Why?

- a) What liberty was at stake, what was the controversy! ***“Unless you are circumcised, you cannot be saved.”***
 - b) Paul would allow none of that bondage on His watch. So NO CIRCUMCISION for Titus! Why?
 - c) Again, to put no stumbling block before a brother!
- (c) So therefore!

1. Here is the general rule which is completely consistent with Paul message in Romans 2:25-29!

- a) If you become circumcised **to be saved**, Christ will profit you nothing.
- b) Every man who is circumcised **to be saved** becomes a debtor to keep the whole law.

- c) If you believe you are justified by law; grace is unnecessary. (*By works of law no flesh will be justified, Romans 3:20, See: [Vernacular](#)*)
 - d) **To be saved** in Christ Jesus, neither circumcision nor uncircumcision avails anything; it's all about God's love for us and His grace through faith!
- (d) Circumcision Reimagined!
- 1. Final word! Do we get rid of circumcision!
Absolutely not!
 - a) Just don't think it will save you!

QUESTIONS & DISCUSSION (USE SERMON NOTES FOR ASSISTANCE)

1. Read Romans 2:17-20. What is the proper understanding of...

- A. Rest on the law?
- B. Boast in God?
- C. Know God's will?
- D. Approve the things that are excellent?
- E. Be instructed out of the law?
- F. Be a guide the blind, a light to those who are in darkness, and an instructor to the foolish?
- G. Have the form of knowledge and truth in the law?
- H. **Help:** Use Romans 3:1-2; I Peter 4:11; Romans 12:1-2 and sermon notes pages 10-15.

2. Write an essay on the proper application of the Law using the following...

- A. The law for kings. (Deuteronomy 17:18-20)
- B. To practice obeying it for blessings. (Deuteronomy 28:1-2)
- C. Fear the Lord! (Proverbs 9:10)
- D. Protecting your heart from pride. (Proverbs 16:18)
- E. To use them to rule well! (II Timothy 3:16-17)
- F. To live long and prosper. (Deuteronomy 5:33)
- G. To raise a successful family. (Deuteronomy 4:40)

3. Write an essay on the proper perspective of the Law using the following...

- A. Blessed is the man who delights in God's law. (Psalms 1:1-2)
- B. The longest chapter in the Bible. All 176 verses of Psalm 119 give honor to the LORD in all His ways and pay tribute to the beauty of His Law. (Psalms 119:1-6)
- C. See Matthew Henry's commentary in sermon notes Pages 20-24.

4. Describe the ideal new system of governance that will work for individuals, marriages, families, communities, organizations, and governments!

- A. Use II Peter 1:5-8 and read the extensive commentary in the sermon notes pages 26-32 to help crafter your answer.

5. Romans 2:21-24 shows the wrong application of the Law.

Write an essay touching on the following...

- A. I hate sin, but I love my sin!
- B. Adultery and Idolatry.
- C. Boasting in the Law and violating it at the same time.
- D. Your claim the law is great, but you dishonor God with it!

6. One of the worst things we can do is misrepresent the faith.

- A. Use the following passage to describe a claim to represent God, while living in habitual disobedience. (I Timothy 1:7; II Timothy 3:1-7; I Timothy 4:1-5)

7. Each of the following passages have been horribly misinterpreted in the modern-day church. Use what you have learned in this sermon to bring correct understanding. (Help can be found in the sermon notes pages 42-50.)

- A. Romans 14:1-23
- B. Acts 10:9-11:18
- C. I Corinthians 8:1-13

8. Romans 2:25-29 introduces circumcision of the heart...

- A. Relate circumcision to obedience. Romans 2:14-15 can help.
- B. What does it mean to be a true Jew?
- C. How do the following passages relate to Romans 2:25-29?
(Deuteronomy 10:16; 30:6; Jeremiah 4:3-4; Ezekiel 36:26-27)

- 9. In the end, you need to know God's heart in order to reimagine circumcision!** (Refer to sermon notes pages 58-64.)
- A. Reconcile the proper perspective on circumcision using Acts 16:1-5; 15:1-5; 15:19-21; I Corinthians 7:19-20; Galatians 2:3-5; 5:1-6; and Romans 3:1-2.