

EVERY TRACK EVERY WEEK WEEK 22: Leader Study Guide

Progress or Perfection? The Law of God

-Welcome!

-Intro: Thanks for being here! Revisit last week's points

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INTRO:

Hi, and welcome to Every Track Every Week. My name is _____ and I am involved with Texas FCA Motocross through _____. I've been involved with FCA MX for ____ years and my favorite thing about the ministry is_____.

This week's discussion is based upon episode #99 of our podcast "The Gospel Driven Athlete" titled, "Progress or Perfection? The Law of God" This week, we are looking at a roughly 400 year-old Christian document known as the Westminster Confession of Faith, in efforts to learn what the historic Christian faith has believed, and still believes, about the Law of God. We will try to answer questions like, "what is the Law of God?" and "what does the Law of God require?". We will also look at the types of God's Law and whether or not we as Christians are required to obey them all still today.

-Ice Breaker Question: When was the last time you accidentally broke the law (examples: speeding, ran a stop sign, trespassing)? Did you get caught? Did you get in trouble?

-Question 1: What is God's Law?

***Answer:**

1) Typically, when we hear or talk about God's Law, we are referring to God's moral law, as defined in the 10 Commandments.

2) Past the moral law as outlined in what God gave to Adam and to the 10 Commandments given to Israel, God also gave what is known as the



ceremonial law and the civil (or judicial) law. So, there are really what we would call 3 types of law- moral, ceremonial, and civil (or judicial).

-Question 2: What are the differences and distinctives between these types of law?

***ANSWER:**

1) We will talk about the “lesser known” types of law a bit first and then move on to what is a little more common and what you might say is a little more prevalent to us today. These first two types of law are types that we are no longer required to follow, so it makes sense why they aren’t as well known. That’s not to say that they aren’t as important... because they definitely are... but these first two types have been abrogated (or done away with) by the coming and fulfillment of Christ.

Ceremonial Law- First, we’ll talk about the ceremonial law. We could easily have done a podcast, or a series of podcasts talking about the ceremonial law itself, but in general, the ceremonial laws are where we see sacrifices and (you guessed it) ceremonies. These ceremonial laws required the blood of bulls, goats, birds, or a number of different types of animals as sacrifices as types and shadows that prefigured Christ. Not to be overly brief on this, but in efforts of hopefully keeping us from getting bogged down with the details, the ceremonial laws were never intended to be a means by which people earned salvation. We read in Hebrews 10:4-7 *“For since the law has but a shadow of the good things to come instead of the true form of these realities, it can never, by the same sacrifices that are continually offered every year, make perfect those who draw near. 2 Otherwise, would they not have ceased to be offered, since the worshipers, having once been cleansed, would no longer have any consciousness of sins? 3 But in these sacrifices there is a reminder of sins every year. 4 For it is impossible for the blood of bulls and goats to take away sins. 5 Consequently, when Christ[a] came into the world, he said, “Sacrifices and offerings you have not desired, but a body have you prepared for me; 6 in burnt offerings and sin offerings you have taken no pleasure. 7 Then I said, ‘Behold, I have come to do your will, O God, as it is written of me in the scroll of the book.’”* I think this is really important to remember, because in certain evangelical circles, it is taught that God saved people differently, at different points in history. And that’s just not the case. God is the same yesterday, today, and forever, and salvation has always been given to sinners by grace alone, through faith alone. That goes for the time periods



when the ceremonial laws were in place, and that goes for now in our day, when we can look back and see Christ as the fulfillment of all of these ceremonial laws and their associated sacrifices. So, since Christ was the fulfillment of the thank offerings, the guilt offerings, and all the sacrifices that were made under the ceremonial laws, and since these things only pointed forward to when the Savior (Jesus) would come and fulfill (meet/ accomplish) what these laws represented and required, they are no longer binding on those who trust in Christ. Since Christ fulfilled them, and we are “in Christ”, we no longer find ourselves under these laws and their rule. Christ was the final sacrifice. The ceremonies and sacrifices of old were foreshadowings of Christ’s ultimate sacrifice and fulfillment of the law.

Civil Law- Second, we have the civil, or judicial law. These laws were meant for (you guessed it) civil purposes. So, these laws were set up for, and unique to, the nation of Israel for the ruling and general governance of God’s uniquely chosen people, the Israelites. Again, in efforts not to get too caught up in the specifics here, these laws were meant for the governance of a specific people, for a specific time. The Westminster Confession of Faith 19.4 says that these laws, “expired together with the state of that people, and do not oblige any other, now, further than general equity thereof may require.” So, essentially, since the New Testament makes clear that with the coming of Christ and His fulfilling all righteousness, the Church (God’s uniquely chosen people) is now made up of all types of people (no longer primarily the Israelites) the specific laws governing that specific people has been done away with. We read in Galatians 3:23-29 *“**23** Now before faith came, we were held captive under the law, imprisoned until the coming faith would be revealed. **24** So then, the law was our guardian until Christ came, in order that we might be justified by faith. **25** But now that faith has come, we are no longer under a guardian, **26** for in Christ Jesus you are all sons of God, through faith. **27** For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ. **28** There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave[g] nor free, there is no male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus. **29** And if you are Christ’s, then you are Abraham’s offspring, heirs according to promise.”* So here, this covenant made with Abraham all the way back in Genesis 15 is shown to include far more than the actual blood lineage of Abraham, and to be extended to all who trust in Christ by faith.

Moral Law- Lastly, we have the moral law. Like we talked about earlier, this is the law that we are most commonly referring to in conversations about the law. Something that may be a little less well-known though is that the 10 Commandments were really just a further iteration of



the law that God gave to Adam in the Garden. We read this account in Gen 2:15-17 “**15** The Lord God took the man and put him in the garden of Eden to work it and keep it. **16** And the Lord God commanded the man, saying, “You may surely eat of every tree of the garden, **17** but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat[d] of it you shall surely die.” So here, we see this concept of “do this and live”. God told Adam to keep and work the garden and to eat of every tree except the tree of knowledge of good and evil. It was explicit that if Adam disobeyed this, he would die. On the flip side of that coin is the implication that if he would obey (i.e. not eat of the tree), he would live forever. So, this moral law was given to Adam in the Garden, when God essentially told Adam “do this and live” and was further iterated by Moses from Mount Sinai in the 10 Commandments. All men are still born under the full obligation and weight of the moral law today, and there are actually 3 different purposes (or what are known as uses) of this law in effect that we will get into on the next podcast.

Question 3: Ok, so we mentioned that all men are born under the requirement and weight of God’s moral law. What does this law require, specifically?

***ANSWER:**

1) God’s Law (both given to Adam in the Garden and given to Israel from Mount Sinai) require perfect, personal, perpetual obedience. In short, God’s law requires that every single person be 100% perfect (all of the time) in what they do, say, and think. For the record, this is not good news. But stay tuned, we will get there!

2) Jesus drives this point home, when He preaches His famous sermon known as the Sermon on the Mount. Contrary to the popular teaching that this sermon was primarily meant to show how people should act, or even some that teach this sermon as something we can actually accomplish, Jesus’ primary goal of the entire Sermon on the Mount (Matt 5-7) was to drive home the full burden of the Law. He was illustrating the foolishness of people who thought they could earn righteousness, or earn salvation, by following the law good enough. He summarizes the requirement of the law in Matt 5:48 when He says, “**you therefore must be perfect as your heavenly Father is perfect.**” This is the requirement of the law- perfection. If you want to be justified by your works, they have to be perfect works. Jesus goes through painstaking efforts to show our inability to be justified by our works.



He goes past the simple external behaviors and obedience to internal thoughts, words, and intentions. And when we are honest with ourselves, while our external actions may look really good to those around us, none of us have ever been completely pure in our motives and thoughts. And yet, were we to be justified by our law-keeping, it would require both perfect internal and perfect external obedience... and we simply are unable to uphold that.

3) However, our inability to perfectly personally, and perpetually uphold the moral law does not in and of itself do away with the requirement. The requirement to uphold this does not go away. We are all required to be perfect, as our heavenly Father is perfect. And that's not good news, because as we talked about, we can't do it. We stand condemned by the law.

-Question 4: What hope is there then?? If we are required to be perfect, but are unable to be, how can we possibly please God and have hope that we will one day have a restored relationship with Him in eternity?

ANSWER:

1) Romans 8:1-4 shows us our hope. Paul says, *“There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus.[a]2 For the law of the Spirit of life has set you[b] free in Christ Jesus from the law of sin and death. 3 For God has done what the law, weakened by the flesh, could not do. By sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh and for sin,[c] he condemned sin in the flesh, 4 in order that the righteous requirement of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not according to the flesh but according to the Spirit.”*

2) Our hope is not in our ability to uphold or fulfill the law well enough ourselves. Our hope is not for God to relax His righteous standard of perfection. How could He remain just and holy, if He did that??? No, our hope is to be “in Christ,” to be found covered by the blood of the lamb, to have the righteousness and perfection of Christ counted to us as our own. As Paul says it, we have to be found as if “the righteous requirement of the law were fulfilled in us”. We still have to meet the standard of perfection... but God in His goodness provides this for us. And he gives it to us by grace, through faith, in Christ alone.



3) So, our hope is in the promise of God to provide the same perfection that He requires, and He does this in and through the person and work of Jesus Christ.

-Question 5: How should these realities and truths drive our attitudes, actions, and lives?

ANSWER:

1)...

-Lets pray

