

## **God's Household, Part 2: "The Proper Use of the Law"**

### **1 Timothy 1:8-11**

Pastor Eric Yee

### **Sermon Series Introduction**

Hi church. If you don't know me, my name is Eric and I'm one of the pastors.

We're currently in our sermon series through 1 Timothy called "God's Household."

Last week, we kicked off the series with Part 1: "The Aim of Sound Doctrine"; and today, we'll continue with Part 2: "The Proper Use of the Law."

I have the privilege to preach the Word of God to us today, so let's get right into it.

### **Sermon Introduction**

Let me start off by asking a question: How do you approach the law?

In general, I'd like to think that we're all law-abiding citizens, but how often do you *think* about the law?

If you're in business, perhaps you look at the law every once in a while, just to make sure you don't do anything against the law.

If you're a lawyer, perhaps you look at the law every day, just to make sure you know exactly what it says and to make sure your clients stay out of trouble.

If you drive a car, perhaps you think about the law in regard to odd and even days, just to make sure you have the right plate.

If you're a student, perhaps you think about the law that prohibits cheating and plagiarism whenever you're taking exams, writing papers, or working on projects

But *why* do we obey laws? Is it simply because we want to be law-abiding citizens? Is it because we want to avoid getting in trouble? Or is it something else?

And if we're a Christian, should that make any difference in how we ought to approach the law?

Whether school law, government law, or most importantly, God's law, Christians ought to understand and use the law *differently* than just to be a good person or to avoid getting in trouble.

### **The One Thing**

***We must understand and use the law in light of the gospel.***

### **Scripture Introduction**

Turn your Bibles to 1 Timothy 1:8-11.

Just want to give a bit of context before jumping into today's passage.

After the apostle Paul was released from his first imprisonment in Rome (Acts 28:30-31), he left Timothy in the city of Ephesus to deal with false teachers in the church and to put things in order for the overall health of the local church.

So last week, we saw how Paul established that the *authority* of sound doctrine is in God and in his Word alone, the church's *stewardship* of sound doctrine must center on the gospel of Jesus Christ, and that the *aim* of sound doctrine is love that issues from a pure heart and a good conscience and a sincere faith.

So that's where we left off and that's where we are as we dive into today's text.

## **Scripture Reading**

So let's read 1 Timothy 1:8-11.

<sup>8</sup> Now we know that the law is good, if one uses it lawfully, <sup>9</sup> understanding this, that the law is not laid down for the just but for the lawless and disobedient, for the ungodly and sinners, for the unholy and profane, for those who strike their fathers and mothers, for murderers, <sup>10</sup> the sexually immoral, men who practice homosexuality, enslavers, liars, perjurers, and whatever else is contrary to sound doctrine, <sup>11</sup> in accordance with the gospel of the glory of the blessed God with which I have been entrusted.

This is God's Word.

## **Overview**

We'll look at three principles for understanding and using God's law in this passage:

- I. The law is good but it cannot make us good (v. 8)
- II. The law is for the lawless and disobedient (vv. 9-10)
- III. The law must be understood and used in light of the gospel (v. 11)

### **I. The law is good but it cannot make us good (v. 8)**

Verse 8 says:

<sup>8</sup> Now we know that the law is good, if one uses it lawfully,

To be clear, when Paul speaks of "the law" here, he's referring to the Law of Moses, and especially the moral law of the Ten Commandments, which he'll allude to later in this passage.

Jesus said that *all* the Law can be summed up in the two greatest commandments to love the Lord your God with all your heart, soul, mind, and strength, and to love your neighbor as yourself (Matt. 22:36-40).

The Ten Commandments themselves are also summed up in that way; the first four commandments are how we ought to love God and the last six commandments are how we ought to love our neighbor (Exod. 20:1-17; Deut. 5:6-21). And *all* the other laws are essentially just an application of those two great commandments to love God and love our neighbor in different life situations.

And Paul wrote a few verses before this in...

1 Timothy 1:5 = The aim of our charge is **love** ...

So the aim of all sound doctrine and all the law is *love*. And that is absolutely *good*. When we are able to obey the law, we ought to be a more loving people and a more loving society. So in that sense, we should absolutely *love* the law.

But is that how you view God's law? Do you honestly *love* the law?

Perhaps that might sound strange to some of us: who really *loves* the law? But listen to how different psalmists speak of God's law.

Psalms 1:2 = but his delight is in the law of the LORD, and on his law he meditates day and night.

Psalm 19:7, 9 = The law of the LORD is perfect, reviving the soul... More to be desired are they than gold, even much fine gold; sweeter also than honey and drippings of the honeycomb.

Psalm 119:97 = Oh how I love your law! It is my meditation all the day.

So *why* did the psalmists *love* God's law? Because God's law *reveals* God's character. Because God *is* love (1 John 4:8), God's law *describes* how we also must love. What God *speaks*, what he *commands*, always comes out of who God *is*. In other words, God's law is an *extension* of God's character. So on some level, if we don't love God's law, we don't love God's character—we don't love God.

But the more we can affirm with Paul and the psalmists that "*the law is good*," the more we'll also be able to affirm that "*God is good*."

So *how* did the psalmists come to *love* God's law? They *meditated* on God's law "day and night." They didn't just read it in the morning and forget it throughout the day. But they thought about it throughout the day and throughout the night. One way to do that is to think not only about the law itself, but begin to reflect on: what is the *heart* of this law and what *kind* of God would give this law? What does this law tell me about God's *character*?

For example, if I read "You shall not steal," I should not just come to the conclusion "Don't do it!" and then stop thinking. But what is at the *heart* of this law? If stealing is simply taking without permission that which belongs to someone else, then stealing doesn't just mean robbing banks and shoplifting.

- Plagiarism is stealing someone else's work without their permission and benefiting from it.
- Illegally downloading software and movies is stealing and depriving owners of rightful profit for their work.
- Misappropriating company funds or resources for personal use without permission is stealing from our employers.
- Getting paid for labor that you honestly do not labor for is stealing from our employers.
- Profiting by deceiving or taking advantage of people's fears, vulnerabilities, powerlessness, or desperation is stealing because their consent is not truly voluntary.
- Receiving for yourself all the credit for work done collectively by your employees, co-workers, or classmates is stealing credit that belongs to them.
- Failing to thank God for his grace in our lives is stealing glory that belongs to God alone.
- And since this commandment is part of the more overarching commandment to love our neighbor as ourselves, "You shall not steal" is not just a *prohibition* but it also has *proactive* implications; like the Good Samaritan (Luke 10:25-37), you should not withhold any good from someone that you can help, but you should *actively* and *generously* share your resources with those in need (Ezek. 18:5, 7-8).

Now what *kind* of God would give this law? What does this law tell me about God's *character*?

Well, God values honesty and integrity and hard work. He's concerned for the well-being of others—not only in terms of finances but even in terms of respect and honor due to others, and not only those in power but especially the vulnerable and powerless.

The more we reflect on this law, the more we realize that *we* are thieves and that *God* is a worker and truth-teller and protector and giver. The law shows us our *own* depravity but also the *goodness* of God.

[<sup>8</sup> Now we know that the law is good, if one uses it lawfully,]

So the law is good, but why does Paul add the condition "*if one uses it lawfully [or properly]*"? Let's look again more closely at what Paul said earlier.

[1 Timothy 1:5 = The aim of our charge is **love that issues from a pure heart and a good conscience and a sincere faith.**]

Paul said in verse 5, "The aim of our charge is love *that issues from* a pure heart and a good conscience and a sincere faith."

In other words, if you understand and use the law properly, then you know that obedience to the law must flow from the *inside out* from “a pure heart and a good conscience and a sincere faith.”

Love of God and love of people cannot just be *external*, but it begins *internally*, and then it works its way out.

Or put another way: red, delicious apples come from healthy trees, not diseased or dead trees.

So if you want to genuinely produce apples, you don't just go to the supermarket and buy apples and then staple them to diseased or dead trees; you need a new, healthy tree!

Unlawful (or improper) understanding and use of the law is thinking that you can just staple on the *external* acts of love that the law demands without the necessary *internal* transformation of the heart, conscience, and faith to genuinely produce the fruit of love.

The aim of the law is genuine, overflowing love for God and love for people, but we can *never* produce that fruit by our own *external* “works of the law” (Gal. 3:2, 5, 10). There must be an *internal* work of the Holy Spirit to first transform our heart, conscience, and faith.

[<sup>8</sup> Now we know that the law is good, if one uses it lawfully,]

So the law is good because it *shows* us that we must love God and love people, but it cannot *make* us good, for that can only come from an *internal* transformation of the heart that we cannot do ourselves.

So where does that leave us then? We'll look at that in the next principle.

But here's the first life application...

**Life Application #1:** Meditate on the law of God to delight more in the character of God.

So first, the law is good but it cannot *make* us good, and second...

## II. The law is for the lawless and disobedient (vv. 9-10)

The beginning of verse 9 says:

<sup>9</sup> understanding this, that the law is not laid down for the just but for the lawless and disobedient, for the ungodly and sinners, for the unholy and profane, ...

When Paul writes “the law is not laid down for the just [or the righteous],” he's speaking the way that Jesus spoke when he said in...

Luke 5:32 = I have not come to call the righteous but sinners to repentance.

Jesus is *not* saying that there are such “righteous” people out there who don't need to be called to repentance because the Bible is very clear that there is none who are righteous (Rom. 3:10), “for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God” (Rom 3:23). Therefore, Jesus calls *everyone*—all “sinners”—to repentance.

[<sup>9</sup> understanding this, that the law is not laid down for the just but for the lawless and disobedient, for the ungodly and sinners, for the unholy and profane, ...]

And similarly, the law is for *everyone*—all “the lawless and disobedient... the ungodly and sinners... the unholy and profane.”

We should not read that and think, “Oh, that’s not me.” That’s perhaps how the false teachers in the Ephesian church thought; seeing themselves as “teachers of the law” (1:7), the law was for those *other* people, but they failed to use it as a mirror for themselves.

So Paul says that part of the good purpose of the law is to *convict* us of sin. He says it this way in...

Romans 7:12-13 = So the law is holy, and the commandment is holy and righteous and good. Did that which is good, then, bring death to me? By no means! It was sin, producing death in me through what is good, **in order that sin might be shown to be sin, and through the commandment might become sinful beyond measure.**

In other words, *the law* doesn’t bring God’s judgment on me, but *my own sin* does. But the law *shows* me that I am indeed lawless and disobedient, ungodly and sinful, unholy and profane—and rightfully deserving of God’s judgment.

For example, if a mother tells her son that if he hits his brother, then he is disobeying her and that it’s wrong and that he will receive a spanking, that is a law that the mother sets for her son. And let’s say the son ends up hitting his brother, and the mother ends up giving him a spanking. What was the *cause* of the son receiving the just judgment of a spanking?

Was the problem with the law that the mother set for her son? No! The law is good, protecting siblings from hurting each other. The law itself did not bring the judgment upon the son, but the son’s *own choice* to disobey and break the law was the cause of him receiving a spanking. The law *showed* him that it is wrong to hit his brother and that disobedience would receive judgment, and the law also *convicted* him of his sinfully disobedience. The law *showed* him and *convicted* him of sin, but *the son alone* brought the just judgment upon himself.

The false teachers wrongly ignored (or “swerved”) from properly using the law to see the sinful reality of their own hearts (1:10). They failed to see that the law cannot *make* us good, but it was meant to *show* us that we are *not* good and to *convict* us of our sin.

In the rest of verse 9 to verse 10, Paul goes on to say that the law is...

<sup>9</sup> ... for those who strike their fathers and mothers, for murderers, <sup>10</sup> the sexually immoral, men who practice homosexuality, enslavers, liars, perjurers, and whatever else is contrary to sound doctrine,

Here, Paul begins to allude to the Ten Commandments as he lists violators of the fifth through ninth commandments, and he gives quite *extreme* examples.

“Those who strike their fathers and mothers” (literally “those who *kill* their fathers and mothers”) are an extreme example of those who violate the fifth commandment to “honor your father and mother” (Exod. 20:12; Deut. 5:16).

“Enslavers” are an extreme example of those who violate the eighth commandment to “not steal” (Exod. 20:15; Deut. 5:19).

And because these are such extreme examples, we may be tempted to think that none of these apply to us. But don’t forget how Jesus clarified the *heart* of these commandments.

He said that everyone who is angry with or insults his brother is liable to judgment along with the one who murders (Matt. 5:21-22) and everyone who looks at a woman with lustful intent has already committed adultery with her in his heart (Matt. 5:27-28).

Jesus also said that you know a tree by its fruit; the good heart produces good but the evil heart produces evil (Luke 6:43-45). The real issue, then, is the *sinful heart* that produces sinful actions. Whether anger or murder, whether lust or adultery, it is the *same sinful heart* that produces such sinful actions.

So Paul says that part of the good purpose of the law is to *restrain* us from carrying out the full expression of sin that our sinful hearts are capable of. Without the law, more fits of anger would turn into more murder and more lustful looks would turn into more adultery, for it is the same sinful heart that they all come out of. The law *convicts* us with the fact that our hearts are more sinful than we could ever realize.

There are over 20 “vice lists” like this in the New Testament, but none are meant to be *exhaustive*, which is why Paul ends with a “catch all” phrase: “and whatever else is contrary to *sound doctrine*.”

And if “sound doctrine is a summary of the Bible’s teaching that is both faithful to the Bible and useful for life,”<sup>1</sup> then we need to know what the Bible teaches. In other words, sin isn’t what *you* think it is or what *others* think it, but it’s what *God* says it is.

I know that there may be some things listed here that we would readily agree are sinful—like killing our parents, murder in general, or enslaving others—but there may be other things that we’re not sure if we’d naturally agree with—like sexual immorality, homosexuality, or lying. In fact, we may even be *offended* to hear that those things are considered to be sinful.

But let me just say that if this is really *God’s Word*, then you would *expect* that he would offend people of *every* culture.

Tim Keller, author of the book *Preaching*, writes this:

“In every culture there are good and bad elements. Isn’t that right? No one culture is perfect or has all truth—agreed?” ... “Now, for the sake of argument, imagine that the Bible is not the product of any one human culture or set of authors but is revelation from God himself. If that were the case, then it would have to offend every person’s cultural sensibilities *somewhere*. No matter who you are, you inhabit an imperfect culture that shapes your beliefs, and the Bible—if it were authoritative revelation from God—would then have to be outrageous to you at some place. Since that is the case, it is no argument against the Bible to say, ‘It offends me at this point.’ That is precisely what you should expect.”<sup>2</sup>

In some cultures, “revenge killings” or “honor killings,” even among family members, is acceptable, but God’s law calls it sin.

In some cultures, sexual relations outside of marriage and practicing homosexuality are embraced, but God’s law calls it sin

In some cultures, enslaving others for child labor or for sexual exploitation is commonplace, but God’s law calls it sin.

In some cultures, lying to save face is expected, but God’s law calls it sin.

No matter who you are, no matter what culture you live in, we must *all* wrestle with what God’s Word says, especially when his law confronts and convicts us of our sin.

But we must also remember that the same God who *confronts* our sin is the same God who *hung* *condemned* in our place on the cross, so that we might be forgiven our sin—if we would only turn to Christ in repentance and faith.

It is God’s grace that he *reveals* our sin to us while there is still time to *repent* of our sin to him. And so, part of the good purpose of the law is that it *convicts* us of our sin before a holy God, but it doesn’t just leave us there; the law then drives us to faith in Christ to be *redeemed* and to understand and use the law *differently* (Rom. 10:4).

And that’s what we’ll look at in the next principle about God’s law.

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<sup>1</sup> Bobby Jamieson, *Sound Doctrine: How a Church Grows in the Love and Holiness of God* (Wheaton, Illinois: Crossway, 2013), 17.

<sup>2</sup> Timothy Keller, *Preaching* (New York: Penguin Books, 2015), 113-114.

But here's the second life application...

### **Life Application #2: Wrestle honestly with the vice list in 1 Timothy 1:9-10.**

What offends you in this list? What is difficult for you to accept as sin? Why is that? Do you find yourself coming up with a separate list of disclaimers to justify these sins? How do your family or cultural influences affect the way you feel about this vice list? What is the *heart* of these sins and what *kind* of God would prohibit them? How do these sins *distort* the fact that God created all things good for our enjoyment (1 Tim. 4:4)? Knowing that the God who *prohibits* these sins is the same God who *died* for our sins, how does that affect how we view this vice list?

We all have a tendency to ignore, excuse, or reject anything that doesn't agree with what we *already* believe. But if we're only willing to submit to what we *already* agree with, it's not true submission. If that's the case, then no matter what we *profess* to believe, we remain as the functional lord over our lives. But if God's Word *really* is God's Word and he *really* is our Lord and Savior, then we must allow God to *challenge* our preconceived notions and *conform* us more into the image he created and redeemed us to reflect (Gen. 1:27; Rom. 8:29).

So first, the law is good but it cannot make us good; second, the law is for the lawless and disobedient; and third...

## **III. The law must be understood and used in light of the gospel (v. 11)**

This is the *culminating* principle about God's law, and it is the *foundational* principle for the other two principles. So don't miss this.

Verses 8-11 is actually one long sentence, so it could actually be read like this:

<sup>8</sup> Now we know that the law is good, if one uses it lawfully, ... <sup>11</sup> in accordance with the gospel of the glory of the blessed God with which I have been entrusted.

In other words, if you want to understand and use the law in a "lawful" or "proper" way, then you need to understand and use it in light of *the gospel*.

If you don't understand *the gospel*, then you won't properly understand *the law*.

Or put another way, if you're a Christian, you ought to understand and use the law *differently* than if you were not a Christian.

To try to understand and use the law *without* the gospel is a miserable life. The law *shows* you that you must be a good and loving person, but it cannot *make* you one.

And to be constantly reminded that we fall short of what God expects of us is such a *miserable* state to be in that we'd rather *deceive* ourselves into thinking that we're keeping the law than to *actually* face the mirror and see how miserably we fall short.

We tell ourselves that God's law is not *actually* God's law, but we lower God's standards or we change them so that we can *deceive* ourselves into thinking that we're *actually* fulfilling them.

It's like the kid who lowers the basketball hoop so that he can dunk the basket because he knows he'd never reach the *actual* height of the standard basketball hoop on his own. But one day, he'll come to terms with the fact that *his* basketball hoop is *not* regulation height, and he'll see how he falls so short of reaching the basket.

Or for those who have the courage to face God's law as it *really* is, we'll live in constant, crushing despair by how much we fall short. No matter how hard we try in our own strength to produce the fruit of love, we keep producing thorns. No matter how hard we try to be good, we keep seeing the evil in our hearts.

To try to understand and use the law *without* the gospel is a *miserable* life, but to understand and use the law *with* the gospel is a *blessed* life.

Paul refers to the gospel (or good news) as “the gospel of the glory of the blessed God.”

The phrase “the gospel of the glory” only occurs in one other place in the Bible in...

2 Corinthians 4:4 = ... the gospel of the glory **of Christ, who is the image of God.**

The gospel is all about the person and work of Jesus Christ, who is the image of God.

In the gospel, we cannot deceive ourselves by trying to lower or change God’s law, but Jesus said that he did not come to *abolish* the law but to *fulfill* them (Matt. 5:17).

In the gospel, we are not crushed by our sin and the judgment that awaits us, but the Bible says that *Jesus* was pierced for our transgressions and crushed for our iniquities (Isa. 53:5).

And so, the gospel enables us to face the *full weight* of God’s law and *not* be crushed because *Christ* has *fulfilled* the law on our behalf and he was *crushed* for our sins.

And through the gospel, the Holy Spirit gives us “a pure heart and a good conscience and a sincere faith.”

In other words, *the gospel* does for us what *the law* could *never* do.

So now, the law is not the means by which we try to be good or to avoid trouble, for Christ is our righteousness and he has taken away our guilt and punishment. Rather, we can now obey the law from the inside out with a new motivation and a new empowerment to live a life pleasing to the God who gave his life for us.

[<sup>11</sup> in accordance with the gospel of the glory of **the blessed God** with which I have been entrusted.]

And Paul calls this “the gospel of the glory of *the blessed God*.” The word “blessed” here means “happy.”

God is the source of all happiness, and in the gospel, he graciously *invites* us to enter into his happiness (Matt. 25:23). On the night before his crucifixion, Jesus said to his disciples in...

John 15:11 = These things I have spoken to you, that **my joy may be in you, and that your joy may be full.**

Christ went to the cross, so that he might *share* his joy with us and that our joy might be *full*. The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy, but Christ came that we may have life and have it abundantly (John 10:10).

<pause>

On one level, that means that the law should *never* be preached *apart* from the gospel. If only the law is demanded, it is an impossible burden; it is a call to a miserable life. And that’s not Christianity. That’s moralism, that’s legalism, and that’s no different than any other religion or ideology.

But it’s only in knowing that Christ has *already* fulfilled the law on our behalf and that he has *already* paid the penalty for our sin on the cross that the burden of the law is lifted. That’s the gospel. That’s true Christianity. And that is a call to a blessed, happy, full, and eternal life in Christ.

The fact that the law should never be preached apart from the gospel doesn’t just apply to these times of *formal* preaching during Sunday Celebration, but also in all the *informal* times that we “preach”—whether to ourselves or to others.

What do you preach to yourself when you fail or fall into sin? For parents, what do you say to your children when they disobey? For everyone, what do you think to yourself about others when they don't meet your expectations?

For many of us, when we fail or fall into sin, we easily *condemn* ourselves: "Why am I so incompetent? Why do I keep on failing? Why do I keep on sinning?"

Or we easily condemn *others*: "Why are *you* so incompetent? Why do *you* keep on failing? Why do *you* keep on sinning? How many times do I need to tell you this?" Whether we say it or simply think it, that is essentially only preaching the law without the gospel—and what a miserable life that perpetuates!

But when we begin to preach the gospel to ourselves, we begin to step into the fullness of life and the joy that Christ came to share with us. "The gospel is that I *am* incompetent, but I have a competent Savior who perfectly lived the life I cannot live on my own. The gospel is that I *have* failed, but my identity is not in my failure but in Christ's victory on my behalf. The gospel is that I *am* sinful, but Jesus Christ, who knew no sin, became sin so that in him I might become the righteousness of God (2 Cor. 5:21)."

As we preach the gospel to ourselves and share it with others, the crushing weight of the law is lifted off our shoulders and placed on the shoulders of Christ on the cross. And as we take our eyes off of ourselves or others and as we begin to fix our eyes on Jesus Christ, it's only *then* that we can experience the forgiveness and freedom and joy and love and fullness that the gospel brings.

<pause>

So the law should *never* be preached *apart* from the gospel, but you also *cannot* preach the gospel *apart* from the law. Let me say that again: you *cannot* preach the gospel *apart* from the law.

If we don't know God's law, how will we be convicted of our sin? How will we see that we are indeed lawless and disobedient? How will we even begin to understand why Jesus went to the cross for us?

Without the law, we won't see how the gospel is "*good news*" at all, but it'll simply be "*news*" like any other news we read that fails to affect our lives in any significant way. Without God's law, without conviction of our sin, there is no gospel to be proclaimed at all.

That means that we cannot shrink back from calling sin "*sin*"—whether in our own lives or in the lives of others around us. Of course, we speak the truth *in love* but we must speak *the truth* (Eph. 4:15). I think we're so used to comforting ourselves and others in ways that actually *prevent* us from seeing our sin for what it really is.

We say things to ourselves or to others like, "Well, nobody's perfect; we all make mistakes" or "Look on the bright side" or "That person deserved it" or "That person *made* you respond that way" or "At least you didn't do something worse" or "Try not to think about it too much."

I think we're all well-meaning in this, but sometimes what we need most in those times when we've sinned in ways that the Bible clearly calls "*sin*" is to call it for what it really is.

We don't blame other people. We don't blame our circumstances. Nobody *made* us sin. But *we chose* to sin. Our *own* sinful hearts are the source of our sins; everything else is just context for the sin that came out of our *own* hearts. As long as we keep ignoring, covering, excusing, and justifying our sin, we keep ourselves away from experiencing the blessed, happy, full, and eternal life in Christ.

But when we can admit to God, to ourselves, and to others: "I've sinned in word, thought, and action. It wasn't the people or circumstances that *caused* me to sin, but my *own* sin overflowed from my *own* sinful heart—and I am without excuse." When we don't just go through the motions of saying those things, but when we *honestly believe* that that is absolutely true, it's only *then* that the gospel will mean something to us. It's only *then* that the gospel can transform us from the inside out because it's only *then* that we realize a need for the gospel at all. The gospel *cannot* be preached (or shared) *apart* from the law.

Here's the third life application...

**Life Application #3:** Speak both the law AND the gospel to yourself and others.

<pause>

[<sup>11</sup> in accordance with the gospel of the glory of the blessed God **with which I have been entrusted.**]

Paul ends by saying that he, and in context, *the church* has been “entrusted” with “the gospel of the glory of the blessed God,” and that is a “stewardship” that we cannot ignore (1:4). *We must* share the good news of Jesus Christ—how he fulfilled the law in our place, how he took the punishment for our sin on the cross, how he now invites us into a life of joyful obedience as we are fully secure in him, and how we receive this glorious gospel of God’s grace through faith in Jesus Christ alone.

That doesn’t mean that we discard or distort the law, but we must now understand and use the law *in light of* the gospel. That means that we don’t hold the law apart from the gospel over people’s heads as an impossible burden; that is a call to a miserable life. But as people who have experienced forgiveness and freedom and joy and love and fullness of life in the gospel, we now, in *love*, use the law to point people to Christ and we now, in *joy*, live out the law as those who are secure in Christ.

**The One Thing**

***We must understand and use the law in light of the gospel.***

Let’s take some time now to respond to God’s Word.