

6. Learning to Practice the Law of Liberty

In our last topic, we saw that we are to show our physical and spiritual children how to treat the poor with respect. This topic is actually a continuation of that topic as we see that we are to show our children how to practice the law of liberty. In an earlier topic, we saw, in James 1:27, that those who practice the perfect law of liberty will be blessed in their actions. As a result, in this topic, we will see how we can show our children how to put the law of liberty into practice in their daily lives.

James 2:8-9 says, “If you really fulfill *the* royal law according to the Scripture, ‘You shall love your neighbor as yourself,’ you do well; but if you show partiality, you commit sin, and are convicted by the law as transgressors.” Here, we see that the royal law is to love our neighbor as we love ourselves. When asked what the great commandment was, Christ replied, in Matthew 22:37-40, ““You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind.” This is *the* first and great commandment. And *the* second is like it: “You shall love your neighbor as yourself.” On these two commandments hang all the Law and the Prophets.” Here, we see that to love God with our whole heart, soul, and mind, and to love our neighbor as ourselves fulfills the whole Old Testament. A royal law is the law of a king. This royal law “to love” is the law of the King of Kings and fulfills the entire Old Testament.

However, these verses also point out that if we show partiality, we have violated the royal law. The reason for this is due to the fact that to show partiality is to commit sin. Any person who shows partiality, is guilty and has already been convicted by the law as a transgressor. Since no one, except Christ, has perfectly loved his neighbor as he loves himself, we have all been convicted by the law as transgressors.

James 2:10-11 says, “For whoever shall keep the whole law, and yet stumble in one *point*, he is guilty of all. For He who said, ‘Do not commit adultery,’ also said, ‘Do not murder.’ Now if you do not commit adultery, but you do murder, you have become a transgressor of the law.” Many people say they have lived a pretty good life, because they have never committed adultery or murder. That is why James makes it clear, here, that partiality makes a person just as guilty of committing sin as is a person who is guilty of committing murder or adultery. Each person is still a transgressor of the law if he or she has ever shown any kind of partiality.

Before we placed our faith in Christ, we stood before God as guilty and condemned. John 3:18 says, “He who believes in Him is not condemned; but he who does not believe is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God.” That condemnation was removed at the moment we placed our faith in Christ. Romans 8:1 says, “*There is* therefore now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus, who do not walk according to the flesh, but according to the Spirit.” For the Christian, that condemnation is removed at the moment of faith. Because we no longer face condemnation, we are now under the law of liberty.

James 2:12-13 says, “So speak and so do as those who will be judged by the law of liberty. For judgment is without mercy to the one who has shown no mercy. Mercy triumphs over judgment.”

Here, we see that we will be judged by the law of liberty, because we no longer face condemnation and judgment. Instead, James 1:25 says, “But he who looks into the perfect law of liberty and continues *in it*, and is not a forgetful hearer but a doer of the work, this one will be blessed in what he does.” Since we will be judged by the law of liberty, for rewards, it is important to understand what that means.

We must begin by explaining the law of liberty. Galatians 5:13 says, “For you, brethren, have been called to liberty; only do not *use* liberty as an opportunity for the flesh, but through love serve one another.” The law of liberty means that we are free. It also means that this freedom makes it possible for us to serve one another through love. In order to practice the law of liberty, we must understand what it means to serve one another through love. Ephesians 2:10 says, “For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them.” Every Christian has been given one or more spiritual gifts, by the Holy Spirit, to equip them to carry out the good works the Lord has prepared for them. We want to help our children learn how to prepare others to carry out the good works for which the Lord has equipped them.

We want to help our physical and spiritual children understand that there are two common ways the world exercises leadership. As Christians, we are able to exercise a third form of leadership. In the world, some people are leaders. That means they can lead people as far as they have gone themselves. However, in the world, most people are drivers. They exercise their authority over other people and drive others until those people get out of the way.

As Christians, however, we are called to be bondservants of Christ. This means that the Lord equips us to exercise a third form of leadership. Servant leadership means that we choose to serve each Christian as an individual and help each person develop their full potential for Christ, which may go far beyond what we are able to do. Philippians 2:2-4 says, “Fulfill my joy by being like-minded, having the same love, *being* of one accord, of one mind. *Let* nothing *be done* through selfish ambition or conceit, but in lowliness of mind let each esteem others better than himself. Let each of you look out not only for his own interests, but also for the interests of others.” If we esteem others better than ourselves, we realize that God has given us the privilege to serve each Christian and help each Christian learn how to exercise his or her spiritual gifts to reach the full potential for which the Lord has created them.

Ephesians 4:11-13 says, “And He Himself gave some *to be* apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers, for the equipping of the saints for the work of ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ, till we all come to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a perfect man, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ.” Here, we see that the Lord gives some Christians gifts to equip others. Ephesians 2:19-20 says, “Now, therefore, you are no longer strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God, having been built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief *cornerstone*.” The apostles gave us eyewitness testimony of the resurrection of Christ. The prophets gave us the written Word of God. As a result, we want to help every Christian learn to build their lives on that foundation.

However, we see that Christ also gives some to be evangelists, pastors, and teachers, to equip the saints for the work of ministry. Every Christian is commanded to preach the Gospel. Mark 16:15 says, “And He said to them, ‘Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature.’” Since the law of liberty says that every Christian is free to serve one another in love, every Christian needs to be shown how to share the Gospel with others. Although Paul said that he was a teacher, we see, in Acts 20:20-21, how he equipped the saints to preach the Gospel. Those verses say, “How I kept back nothing that was helpful, but proclaimed it to you, and taught you publicly and from house to house, testifying to Jews, and also to Greeks, repentance toward God and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ.” Paul took these men with him and showed them publicly, and in homes, how to share the message of repentance and faith with both Jews and Greeks.

The word translated “pastor” is used eighteen times in the New Testament. The other seventeen times, it is always translated “shepherd”. Six of the uses are in John 10, where we see that a shepherd leads, feeds, and protects. The New Testament gives us thirty-one ways to minister to one another as Christians. Since pastors (shepherds) are to equip the saints for the work of the ministry, pastors are to equip the saints to minister to one another. Pastors do this by showing each Christian how to apply Hebrews 10:24-25, where we read, “And let us consider one another in order to stir up love and good works, not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as *is* the manner of some, but exhorting *one another*, and so much the more as you see the Day approaching.” As Christians, each one of us is to be equipped to minister to one another.

Every Christian is also to be equipped to teach and apply the Word of God. Our commission, in Matthew 28:19-20, is to make disciples. Matthew 13:52 uses the word translated “make disciples” to give us the definition of a disciple. That verse says, “Then He said to them, ‘Therefore every scribe instructed concerning the kingdom of heaven is like a householder who brings out of his treasure *things* new and old.’” Here, we see that each person who has become a disciple:

- has been instructed
- is the head of a spiritual household (has one or more spiritual children)
- has a treasure (has learned to explain and apply the Word of God)
- is able to bring out of that treasure things that are new (has a learner’s attitude)
- is able to bring out of that treasure things that are old (can teach the basics of Christianity)

Our physical and spiritual children may or may not have specific gifts to equip others. However, each of our children can be shown how to show others how to share the Gospel, how to minister to other Christians, and how to teach and apply the Word of God. May the Lord richly bless you as you show your children how to practice the law of liberty by serving other Christians.