

DOTA 127 TEACHING 31
GOD'S WORK: A DISCIPLE CAN TALK ABOUT GOD'S WORK
THROUGH THE OLD TESTAMENT LAW – PART 2

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(T) Welcome to **Discipleship training On The Air**. In this teaching series you may learn to become a disciple of Jesus Christ. This is the second day that two teachers explain God's work through the Old Testament law. As you listen to this programme, make notes in a notebook or record the programme. Today's teaching is: **A DISCIPLE KNOWS GOD'S WORK THROUGH THE OLD TESTAMENT LAW – PART 2**. We will continue to study the meaning of the Ten Commandments and we will study the New Testament view of the law.

(S) The fourth commandment says, "Remember the Sabbath day by keeping it holy." The fourth commandment *teaches the wisdom of using one day in every week for refreshment, fellowship and constructive service*. One. The Old Testament teaching. In Exodus 23:12 we read, "Six days do your work, but on the seventh day do not work, so that your ox and your donkey may rest and the slave born in your household, and the alien as well, may be refreshed." Here the purpose of resting one day out of every seven working days is to rest and get refreshed. In Leviticus 23:3 we read, "There are six days when you may work, but the seventh day is a Sabbath of rest, a day of sacred assembly." Here the purpose of resting one day out of every seven working days is to have the opportunity to meet together with other Christians in a sacred assembly. Two. The false teaching of the Jewish religious leaders. In the New Testament time, the Jewish religious teachers had buried the fourth commandment under a catalogue of 39 forbidden works on the Sabbath. They commanded that Jews were not allowed to sow or reap or cook food or carry things on the Sabbath. They had set aside the commands of God in order to observe their own foolish man-made religious traditions (Mark 7:9). Three. The true teaching of Jesus. Jesus views the Sabbath differently. In Mark 2:18-22, he emphasises that those who are living in his very presence should be feasting instead of fasting, rejoicing rather than mourning. In Mark 2:28 Jesus says, "The Son of Man is Lord even of the Sabbath." He has authority over everything and thus possesses authority to lay down principles that govern the Sabbath day. By his coming, Jesus Christ ushered in a new order. Fasting days and Sabbath days belong to the old order. *The first purpose of the Sabbath is to rest from ordinary work*. In Mark 2:23-27 Jesus says, "The Sabbath was made for man, not man for the Sabbath." Just as God rested after his work of creation, people should rest after every six days of work and get refreshed. *The second purpose of the Sabbath is to meet together to worship God*. Leviticus 23:3 already taught that Christians should meet together on the rest day for a sacred assembly. Isaiah 56:6 teaches that Christians should love and serve God on the rest day. Hebrews 4:9-10 teaches that Christians should look forward with joyful anticipation to the eternal rest day that will begin with the Second Coming of Christ. *The third purpose of the Sabbath is to do good works*. In Mark 3:1-5 Jesus asks, "Which is lawful on the Sabbath: to do good or to do evil, to save life or to kill?" Isaiah 58:6-14 teaches that especially on the rest day Christians should break the chains of injustice and deliver people from their bondage, feed the hungry and clothe the poor, and care for people that are oppressed and persecuted. Isaiah 58 already showed that the ceremonial aspect in the fourth commandment had been replaced by wise principles. Later the Christians applied these wise principles to their rest day, which was the first day of the week, because they also commemorated the resurrection of Jesus Christ on that day (Acts 20:7, 1 Cor 16:2).

(T) The fifth commandment says, "Honour your father and your mother." The fifth commandment *upholds orderly family life and commands people to honour their parents*. The Old Testament penal law punished transgressors severely. Anyone who cursed or attacked his father or mother had to be put to death (Ex 21:17,15). A stubborn and rebellious son, who did not obey his father and his mother and would not listen to them when they disciplined him, or who lived an immoral, reckless and drunken life, had to be stoned to death (Deut 21:18-21). The Old Testament also gave the name of *father* to rulers, prophets and teachers (Gen 45:8, 2 Ki 2:12). And the man who showed contempt for the judge or the priest, had to be put to death (Deut 17:12). In the New Testament, when children are still under age and dependent on their parents, they should honour their parents also by obeying them in everything that is not against the Bible (Col 3:20, Eph 6:1-1-3).

(S) The sixth commandment says, "You shall not murder." The sixth commandment *upholds the sanctity of life and forbids the wilful killing of people*. One. Suicide is murder. The sixth commandment prohibits suicide, because the object killed was not specified. Two. Murder and the death sentence. The Old Testament commanded the legality of the death sentence. In Leviticus 24:17 is written, "If anyone takes the life of a human being, he must be put to death." Intentional killing was punishable with death. Intentional murderers could not be ransomed by paying a fine or by imprisonment, because Numbers 35:31 says, "Do not accept a ransom for the life of a murderer, who deserves to die. He must surely be put to death." Kidnapping was punishable with death. In Exodus 21:16 is written, "Anyone who kidnaps another and either sells him or still has him when he is caught must be put to death." If a death occurs through certain situations of neglect, then the person was guilty. For example, if he neglected to build a parapet around the roof of his house and somebody fell off and died (Deut 22:8) or if he neglected to keep a dangerous animal penned up and it killed another person (Ex 21:28-32), then

he was guilty of bloodshed and had to be put to death. However, the death sentence could not be imposed on the unintentional killing of persons (Ex 21:12-13). When a death occurred in a situation of self-defence, then the person was not guilty. In Exodus 22:2 is written, "If a thief is caught breaking in and is struck so that he dies, the defender is not guilty of bloodshed." The New Testament upholds the legality of the death sentence. In Romans 13:4 we read that a person in authority "is God's servant to do you good. But if you do wrong, be afraid, for he does not bear the sword for nothing." Three. Revenge. The Old Testament penal law with regard to causing injury was "eye for eye, tooth for tooth, hand for hand, foot for foot, burn for burn, wound for wound, bruise for bruise" (Ex 21:23-25). In the New Testament, Jesus radically changed these Old Testament penal laws. In Matthew 5:38-42 he says, "Do not resist an evil person. If someone strikes you on the right cheek, turn to him the other also. And if someone wants to sue you and take your tunic, let him have your cloak as well. If someone forces you to go one mile, go with him two miles." This teaching of Jesus shows that the Old Testament moral law is only partially valid in the New Testament!

(T) The seventh commandment says, "You shall not commit adultery." The seventh commandment *upholds the marriage institution and forbids all kinds of sexual immorality.* One. In the Old Testament God's people had to enforce this law. Sexual immorality before marriage was punishable with death (Deut 22:20-21). Sexual immorality after marriage was also punishable by death. Both people who had been involved in adultery, had to be killed (Deut 22:22). Leviticus 18 forbade incest, homosexuality and bestiality (vs 6,22,23). And Leviticus 20 sentenced all those who commit adultery, incest, homosexuality and bestiality to death (vs 10,13,15,17). Two. In the New Testament God himself enforces this law. God himself will punish the violators of the seventh commandment. In Hebrews 13:4 is written, "Marriage should be honoured by all, and the marriage bed kept pure, for God will judge the adulterer and all the sexual immoral." *Sexual immorality* is all sex before marriage and *adultery* is all sex outside marriage. Thus, the Bible forbids all sexual relationships before marriage and outside a person's own legal marriage! Sex is allowed only inside a legal marriage! Today, God punishes violators of the seventh commandment with aids and other sexual diseases.

(S) The eighth commandment says, "You shall not steal." The eighth commandment *upholds respect for another person's property.* One. Owner and steward. God is the only Owner of all property (1 Chron 29:11-12) and Luke 16 teaches that we are the stewards or managers of God's property on earth. Two. Stealing. God forbids stealing, robbing and cheating (Lev 19:11,13,35,36). Three. Restitution. The punishment for theft was restitution. The thief had to pay the double amount of what he stole to the original owner. In the case where the thief had already destroyed what he had stolen, he had to repay four or five times the original amount (Ex 22:1-15). Four. Work and share. In the New Testament, former thieves are commanded to work with their own hands and even learn to share their possessions with other needy people (Eph 4:28).

(T) The ninth commandment says, "You shall not give false testimony." The ninth commandment *upholds the good name of people.* A person may not tell lies or spread false reports (Ex 23:1). A person who gave a false testimony, had to be punished with what he intended to do to the other person (Deut 19:18-19). The Old and New Testament also forbids malicious gossiping and slander.

(S) The tenth commandment says, "You shall not covet." The tenth commandment forbids wrong desires and ambitions.

(T) **POINT 5. THE NEW TESTAMENT VIEW OF THE LAW.**

The division of the Old Testament Law into the three parts: the ceremonial law, the civil law and the moral law, does not mean that these consist of clearly delineated laws. They are sometimes mixed in the Old Testament. The ceremonial law was fulfilled in Christ and has ceased to apply to Christians. The civil law was intended to regulate the civil life of the nation and state of Israel and as such has ceased to apply to Christians. However, both the ceremonial law as well as the civil law contain religious and ethical principles that belong to the moral law. Some aspects of the moral law still apply to Christians and others don't. For example, the ceremonial aspect of the fourth commandment concerning keeping the Sabbath no longer applies to Christians. Moreover, many other moral laws are found in the Old Testament besides the Ten Commandments. For example, the law to love God and your neighbour as yourself.

First. Jesus upholds the moral law. During the days of Jesus, the Jewish teachers had distorted the meaning of the Old Testament Law beyond recognition by adding many of their own man-made laws to God's law. The religious teachers and leaders of the Jews put a yoke on the shoulders of people that consisted of 613 rules, of which 365 were prohibitions and 248 were commands! They moreover made the keeping of the law a condition for salvation! Both Jesus as well as Paul rejected this view and use of the law. They uphold the law as God originally intended it. In Matthew 5:17 Jesus says, "Do not think that I have come to abolish the law and the prophets; I have not come to abolish them but to fulfil them." Jesus then proceeds to teach how these commandments should be properly understood and how they should be properly applied in the New Testament time. For example, in Matthew 5:21-26 he explains the sixth commandment, "Do not murder." The correct understanding and application is not limited to killing of life, but also includes killing of somebody's feelings and reputation by anger. In Matthew 5:27-30 he explains the seventh commandment, "Do not commit adultery."

Again the correct understanding and application is not limited to being caught in the act of sexual immorality, but includes the inner thoughts and imaginations about sexual immorality.

(S) Second. The apostle Paul upholds the moral law. In Romans 7 he says, “The law is holy, and the commandment is holy, righteous and good. ... The law is spiritual. ... In my inner being I delight in God’s law. (vs 12,14,22).” But he rejects the law as interpreted by the religious teachers and leaders of the Jews as a means to obtain eternal life. In Romans 3:28 he says, “We maintain that a man is justified by faith apart from observing the law.” He also teaches that Christians have been set free from the condemning power and curse of the law (Gal 3:13). Because not a single person could keep the law, the law was a *curse*, that is, it marked all people for destruction. The salvation in Jesus Christ sets people free from this curse!

(T) Third. Paul teaches the various functions of the moral law.

One. The law functions as a mirror. The law teaches us to know what is sin. In Romans 3:20 he says, “Through the law we become conscious of sin.”

Two. The law functions as a magnifying glass. The law helps us to realise how big and ugly our sins are. In Romans 5:20 he says, “The law was added so that the trespass might increase.”

Three. The law functions as a judge. The law condemns us to being guilty and holds us accountable to God. In Romans 3:19 he says, “Whatever the law says, it says to those who are under the law, so that every mouth may be silenced and the whole world held accountable to God.”

Four. The law functions as a schoolteacher. The law shows us our need of Christ and his righteousness and leads us to the Saviour. In Galatians 3:24 he says, “The law was put in charge to lead us to Christ.” The law demands that people accept the gospel and believe in Jesus Christ!

Five. The law functions as a guide. The law tells Christians how God’s people should live. They should express their new life through love! In Romans 13:8-10 he says, “Love is the fulfilment of the law.” The law demands that Christians lead a life of gratitude in harmony with the requirements of the law.

Six. The law functions as a bridle. The law restrains sin in the world. In 1 Timothy 1:9-11 he says, “The law is made *not* for the righteous but for lawbreakers and rebels, the ungodly and sinful; for those who kill their fathers and mothers, for murderers, for adulterers and perverts, for slave traders and liars and perjurers - and for whatever else is contrary to the sound doctrine.” The law should form the basis for criminal justice in the world.

(S) Fourth. Jesus summarises the moral law in terms of love. In Mark 12:29-31 he says, “The most important commandment is this: ‘Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength’. The second is this: ‘Love your neighbour as yourself’. There is no commandment greater than these.” In the Ten Commandments, the first 4 commandments are specific commandments how we should love God. And the last 6 commandments are specific commandments how we should love our neighbour. In Romans 13:8-10, Paul also says that love is the fulfilment of the law. He says, “Let no debt remain outstanding, except the continuing debt to love one another, for he who loves his fellow-man has fulfilled the law. The commandments, “Do not commit adultery,” “Do not murder,” “Do not steal,” “Do not covet,” and whatever other commandment there may be, are summed up in this one rule: “Love your neighbour as yourself.” Love does no harm to its neighbour. Therefore, love is the fulfilment of the law.” While the laws in the Old Testament were mostly formulated *in negative terms*, “Do not steal from your neighbour or murder him”, Jesus and Paul formulated the law *in positive terms*, “Love your neighbour by caring for his property and by protecting his life”. *Love* should be the way in which all the laws are fulfilled!

(T) Fifth. Jesus climaxed the moral law in terms of love, as he loved. In John 13:34-35 he says, “A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. By this all men will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another.” What is *new* is the example of love that Jesus gave! Jesus Christ is our example how we should fulfil the law. The only standard of measuring obedience to the law, is Christ’s love for us. We fulfil the law, not by simple human love for others, but by divine love as Jesus loved. This is possible only if we have the Holy Spirit living in our hearts. Whatever God commands, he also provides for us, so that we can live, as he wants us to live. In Romans 5:5 we read, “God has poured out his love into our hearts by the Holy Spirit, whom he has given us.” The purpose of the Christian life is obedience to Christ (1 Pet 1:2) and to live a holy and blameless life in the sight of God (Eph 1:4).

Summary. Keeping the law does not save Christians, but they should obey the moral law out of gratitude for the salvation they received and out of love for Jesus Christ.

(S) ASSIGNMENT FOR NEXT WEEK

First. Choose one of the moral laws of God and practise it as an expression of your gratitude and love for what God has done for you. Listen tomorrow to God’s work through our death and our resurrection. We will study the nature of death and what happens when we die.

Second. See the workbooks “Go and make disciples” and Internet on www. Etc.

Third. Listen on short wave radio every SATURDAY to WEDNESDAY to “Discipleship training on the air”.