

(1 Tim. 1:8) – The Apostle Paul had identified false teachers who had subtly crept into the church at Ephesus as those who desired “to be teachers of the law” but who did not understand what they were saying nor what they confidently claimed to know of the law. Paul’s assertion here is that they used the law unlawfully (i.e. in an illegitimate or wrong way). Here, he assures Timothy that the problem was not with the law – **“But we know that the law is good, if a man use it lawfully.”** What law were these false teachers teaching, and what are the wrong ways and the right ways to use the law? We know that one of the most common heresies taught by false teachers who were Jews was in insisting that Gentile believers be physically circumcised for salvation and righteousness. Some would also try to bring believers under the law of Moses, either all or in part, for salvation and righteousness, especially in the matters of the keeping of holy days and sabbath days. No matter what specific law it is, if it is used to motivate sinners to obtain life, righteousness, salvation, forgiveness, or acceptance with God, it will only serve to condemn (Rom. 9:33–10:4). But it is good if a man uses it for the purpose for which it was designed by God. A lawful and right use of the law for unbelievers is for the knowledge and conviction of sin, and to shut them up to Christ and God’s grace for all salvation (Rom. 3:19-20; 5:20-21; Gal. 3:19; Heb. 10:1). We need to understand that the Old Covenant law of Moses, as a system, has been abolished by way of fulfillment in and by Christ. We today are under the New Covenant. There are moral principles common to both, but these principles were in effect before, during, and after the Old Covenant.

A right use of the law (even God’s commandments under the New Covenant) for believers is to show us our sinfulness and continually drive us to Christ for salvation, righteousness, life, and acceptance with God. Because of the remaining presence of our sinful flesh, we must look to Christ alone, not the law, as our only righteousness before God – Christ’s righteousness imputed to us. We who believe in Him must ever be aware that if God were to judge us based on our best efforts to keep His Word, we would be condemned forever! However, it is a right use of the law as given us by Christ in His Word to seek to obey His Word as motivated by grace, gratitude, and love for Him (2 Cor. 5:14-15).

(1 Tim. 1:9-10a) – **“Knowing this, that the law is not made for a righteous man”** – We know that the whole human race by Adam fell into a state of unrighteousness, of sin, death, and depravity, so that by nature “there is none righteous, no, not one” (Rom. 3:10). But if there were any righteous men on earth, they would not need the law in any form. The law is necessary to curb the sinful appetites and goals of sinners. And we also know that God’s elect are made righteous, not by their law-keeping, but by Christ Who is the end of the law for righteousness to every one who believes in Him (Rom. 10:4; 2 Cor. 5:21). Those who are saved by God’s grace that reigns through righteousness unto eternal life by Jesus Christ our Lord have nothing to fear from the law (Rom. 5:21). The law cannot charge them

or condemn them for their sins (Rom. 8:33-34). We are not under the law (its curse and condemning power), we are under grace (salvation, righteousness, and life) (Rom. 6:14).

So, in other words, Paul says that the law is not made for the justified man; it is made for the unjustified man. And then he describes the unjustified man here with all these adjectives which represent violations of the commandments of the moral law. The law is made for sinners as listed by Paul in the following which covers both sins of idolatry and false religion as well as sins of immorality. Before we consider these things, we need to be reminded that we are all sinners who in our character and conduct, at our best, fall short of the perfection of righteousness found only by God's grace in the merits of Christ as our Surety, Substitute, and Redeemer. The only perfect righteousness we have is what we have by virtue of Christ's righteousness imputed to us. The following list describes unregenerate unbelievers whose life-styles are characterized by rebellion and enmity with God.

“For the lawless and disobedient” – This describes both the self-righteous religionist who is seeking salvation by his works as well as the rebellious person who against conscience determines to break the law. Both are lawless and disobedient.

“Ungodly” describes those who have no reverence for God as He reveals Himself in His Word through the Lord Jesus Christ and no interest in the salvation that glorifies God alone.

“Sinners” describes all who continually fall short as they reject Christ and the perfection of righteousness of the law that can only be found in Christ. **“Unholy”** describes those who consider nothing sacred and have no devotion to or fear of God. They are indifferent to that which is right which leads them to behave in a profane way. They oppose all that God stands for and does! **“Profane”** describes those who show contempt for what is holy.

“For murderers of fathers and murderers of mothers, for manslayers” – Murder of anyone is a great sin deserving of death. Someone said that Paul's mentioning of fathers and mothers may have reference to children who murder them for their inheritance.

“Whoremongers, them that defile themselves with mankind” – These are sexual sins involving fornication, adultery, and homosexuality. **“Menstealers”** involves kidnapping and forced slavery which is never condoned. **“Liar”** and **“perjured persons”** include all who make it a habit to lie for their own gain and false witnesses in courts of law.

(1 Tim. 10b-11) – “Contrary to sound doctrine; According to the glorious Gospel of the blessed God” – Paul makes it clear that all sin is opposed to God's truth and God's Gospel. The Gospel never teaches a salvation provided in order to excuse our sinful behavior. It teaches salvation freely given to save us from sin by Christ, and is sealed upon our hearts by the Holy Spirit to give us the right motives to fight sin and seek to obey God according to His revealed Word.