

The Spirit of Law-and-the Spirit of Grace

by Denny Kenaston

The sermon highlights the difference between the spirit of law and the spirit of grace, emphasizing the importance of living under the principles of grace for a life of liberty, freedom, and power to do God's will.

Scripture: Matthew 11:28, John 1:12, 2 Corinthians 3, Hebrews 13:8

Topics: "Law And Grace", "Spiritual Liberty"

Description

Denny Kenaston preaches about the impact of living under the spirit of law versus the spirit of grace, focusing on how it influences relationships in various aspects such as between spouses, with children, and with God. He contrasts the giving of the law by Moses with the coming of grace and truth through Jesus Christ, emphasizing the effects, attitudes, and glory associated with each. Kenaston delves into the differences between law and grace, highlighting how they affect one's view of God, oneself, and others, urging listeners to choose the spirit of grace for liberty, acceptance, and power to do God's will.

Transcript

There are many areas that the spirit of law or the spirit of grace can affect, but this booklet will address mostly how it affects relationships--relationships between husbands and wives, with one another, with children, and with God.

But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name: Which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God. And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth. John bare witness of him, and cried, saying, This was he of whom I spake, He that cometh after me is preferred before me: for he was before me. And of his fullness have all we received, and grace for grace. For the law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ. No man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him. (John 1:12-18)

Different Beginnings

As an introduction I would like us to consider the difference between the coming of the law, and the coming of grace and truth. The scripture here says the law came by Moses. Let us just for a moment lay a little ground work for the message, go back, and remember how the law came. Exodus chapter 20 is where we would drop in and read if we were going to read about when the law was given. But if you

remember, God told Moses to gather the people together, and to sanctify them, because He would be appearing unto them the third day. The people were to gather outside and around the mount, and Moses was to go up into the mount. There God spoke to His people. They heard His words, they heard His laws. And we know the scene that is set there: Mount Sinai, a place of trembling. There was a place of thundering, there was a fire on that mountain, and the Bible says that the people exceedingly feared and quaked as they heard the words come forth from the mountain. Well, this is the way the law came by Moses. It had its effects on the people, there when they heard it and down through the centuries after they heard it. That law had its effect upon people.

The Bible says grace and truth came by Jesus Christ. What a different way grace and truth came! Here He comes, just like everybody else. He humbles Himself, fulfills all manner of righteousness, is baptized there of John in the river Jordan, and the Spirit of God descends upon Him. Then out into the wilderness He goes, He comes back, He's seated there speaking to the people; and what is the ministry of grace and truth but to bind up the broken hearted, to minister grace to people, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and to loose those who are bound? This is the way grace and truth came. When John described it he said "We beheld his glory." It was beautiful! It was the glory as of the only begotten of the Father. That's the testimony we have of our Lord Jesus! He was full of grace and He was full of truth! What a beautiful combination those two make together, don't they? Grace--that is the divine influence and power of the grace of God working on the heart of an individual. And truth--that is the divine revelation of the mind and will of God. We read in the scriptures that our Lord Jesus was full of both of them. He was full and running over of the grace of God, the divine power, the unction, the strength that was needed to live the way He needed to live. And He was also full and running over of the truth of the Word of God. That was our Lord Jesus. The Law came by Moses, but it came in a very different way than the coming of grace and truth.

As our Lord Jesus begins to manifest Himself and His ministry upon the earth, the people marvel at the gracious words which come out of His mouth. Words like these: Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls. (Matthew 11:28-30) This is very different than the law which came on Mt. Sinai; a totally different influence and effect.

Different Effects

There is a difference between the effects of the law and in the effects of grace upon our lives. There is a difference in the attitudes that flow out of a life which is controlled by the principles of law, as compared to those that flow out of a life which is controlled by the principles of grace. Maybe that would be a good way to divide the two of them in our minds. There are those who live by the principles of law, and there are those who live by principles of grace. The influence of the principles of law is very far from the influence of the principles of grace in someone's life.

Do we begin again to commend ourselves? Or need we, as some others, epistles of commendation to you, or letters of commendation from you? Ye are our epistle written in our hearts, known and read of all men: Forasmuch as ye are manifestly declared to be the epistle of Christ ministered by us, written not with ink, but with the Spirit of the living God; not in tables of stone, but in fleshy tables of the heart. (2 Corinthians 3:1-3) Notice the difference there again, the effect of the principles of law, compared to the effect of the principles of grace. One is only written on a table of stone, or a piece of paper, or a book somewhere, but the other is written on the fleshy tables of the heart. This is a very big difference.

And such trust have we through Christ to God-ward: Not that we are sufficient of ourselves to think any thing as of ourselves; but our sufficiency is of God; Who also hath made us able ministers of the new testament; not of the letter, but of the spirit: for the letter killeth, but the spirit giveth life. (2 Corinthians 3:4-6) There again we see the difference between the principles of law and the principles of the spirit of grace: one kills, and the other gives life.

Different Glory

But if the ministration of death, written and engraven in stones, was glorious, so that the children of Israel could not stedfastly behold the face of Moses for the glory of his countenance; which glory was to be done away: How shall not the ministration of the spirit be rather glorious? For if the ministration of condemnation be glory, much more doth the ministration of righteousness exceed in glory. (2 Corinthians 3:7-9) Now let me explain just a little bit what the word "ministration" means. It's basically the same word as ministry: that which flows out--out of a life, out of a family, out of a congregation. We have a ministry: the ministration of your life, the ministration of your family, or the ministration of a church. Now if the ministration (that which flowed out) of condemnation be glory, how much more doth the ministration of righteousness exceed in glory! You see, the law was given as a ministration of condemnation, so that its effect and its influence would bring condemnation. It would bring death. It would bring someone to a place where they realize they cannot do it, and only then turn to Christ, where they can find the grace of God to do it. That little verse there is saying that the ministration which produces and fosters righteous living exceeds in glory.

For even that which was made glorious had no glory in this respect, by reason of the glory that excelleth. (2 Corinthians 3:10) The ministration of righteousness is so much more glorious than the ministration of condemnation. It just crowds it out of the way.

For if that which is done away was glorious, much more that which remaineth is glorious. Seeing then that we have such hope, we use great plainness of speech: And not as Moses, which put a veil over his face, that the children of Israel could not stedfastly look to the end of that which is abolished: But their minds were blinded: for until this day remaineth the same veil untaken away in the reading of the old testament; which veil is done away in Christ. But even unto this day, when Moses is read, the veil is upon their heart. Nevertheless when it shall turn to the Lord, the veil shall be taken away. Now the Lord is that Spirit: and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty. (2 Corinthians 3:11-17) Liberty means power to do the will of God. Let us remember this little phrase as we go through many different points: where the Spirit of the Lord is there is liberty, or power, or grace, or strength, to do the will of God. So, when we begin to ponder this whole matter of the effects of the principles of law compared to the effects of the principles of grace, surely we want to live on the grace side because where the Spirit of the Lord is there is the liberty, that is, power to do the will of God.

But we all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord. (2 Corinthians 3:18)

Three Relationships Affected by Law

The principles of law and the principles of grace have very different effects. If you are living by the principles of law, it will totally affect how you think about God. It will affect how you think about yourself. It will greatly affect how you relate to others.

1. With God

It will affect the way you think about God. If in your mind you're thinking and relating in your Christian life after principles of law, that means you have to do something in order to please God. That will affect the way you look at God. Every one of us knows, if we stop and think about it, if you have to please God by the things you do, then if you don't do everything that you're supposed to do, you're not pleasing God, and thus you live under God's displeasure most of your life. To live under that sense of God's displeasure is not the will of God for a Christian! By the way, to live under the sense of God's displeasure is a false sense! It's a theology that we brought upon our own mind.

2. With Yourself

It will affect how you think about yourself. If you're living after the persuasion of the principles of law, then you have to perform, and if you don't perform, you're a failure, and if you're a failure, you'll begin to think like a failure, you'll feel like a failure, you'll make decisions like a failure, and you'll be a failure. That's the way it works.

The spirit of law and the spirit of grace are very different from each other. The one, if you carry it all the way to its end you'll have a Pharisee. And the other, if you carry it all the way to its end, you'll have a beautiful example of Jesus Christ upon this earth. Which one do we want? Do we want to be a Pharisee? Or do we want to be a beautiful example of Jesus Christ? The Pharisees were afraid of God. The Pharisees were proud of their attainments. They figured they were pleasing God by their attainments, and were proud of them. The Pharisees had very little influence on other people. On the other hand, our Lord Jesus Christ wasn't afraid of God, but He rested in the love of His Heavenly Father, throughout every day. He was filled with humility and meekness, rather than pride of attainment. And last of all, He was the most influential man that ever walked on the earth. Which one do we want?

3. With Others

It will greatly affect the way you relate to others. It will affect the way you raise your children. It will affect the way you relate to your spouse. It will affect the way you relate to your brothers and sisters in the Lord. It will also affect how you relate to a lost and dying world. We'll see these as we go down several points of comparison between the spirit of law, and the spirit of grace. We'll be able to see there is a great difference in the effects, or the influence, that we have on other people.

The Danger of Law

There is a danger of our hearts being established by law and not by grace. Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and to day, and for ever. Be not carried about with divers and strange doctrines. For it is a good thing that the heart be established with grace; not with meats, which have not profited them that have been occupied therein. We have an altar, whereof they have no right to eat which serve the tabernacle. (Hebrews 13:8-10) Don't let your heart be established in legal codes and rules, but rather let it be established in grace, because Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, and today, and forever.

Fifteen Differences Between Law and Grace

Let us look at a few of these differences. I have fifteen of them, believe it or not. But I don't plan to spend a long time on them, because I'd like you to get the principle of operating under law, and operating under grace. I want you to see the difference between the two.

1. The spirit of the law demands. It allows no excuse, it must be this way, and no other! You'll do this, and you have no choice, no excuse! This is the way it must be, this is the way you must do it. The spirit of grace encourages. It comes alongside and encourages you in the direction of holiness and righteousness. "Go this way! That's right! That's good! Keep on going! Keep your heart open! Just keep going! This is the way to go." One is the spirit of law; the other is the spirit of grace. They have a tremendous effect on how we relate to people, don't they?

2. The law condemns. Condemnation is judgment. Condemnation is heavy. It brings the heart down low. Grace convicts, enlightens the heart. It is that still small voice, that sweet prompting of the Spirit of God inside of the heart of God's people. The gentle Spirit comes along side, and enlightens the heart: "You know, you shouldn't have done that."

Think of it, think of how the grace of God works in your life. You make a mistake, you say something out of sort, and it might be five minutes and all of a sudden you have that little quiet moment there by the kitchen sink or at your workbench and the grace of God says: "You shouldn't have done that." But the spirit of law condemns: "That was wrong! You are wicked!" and all of those kind of things that go along with it.

If we are moving in the spirit of law, that's going to have a very different effect than if we're moving in the spirit of grace. I believe that when we work with people, God would have us work like the Holy Spirit, not like the law. Rather than condemn, judge, and give feelings of failure and judgment, come along side and give a gentle encouragement as the gentle wooing of the Spirit of God.

3. The law brings bondage. The word bondage means just what it says: Bound. The spirit of law brings bondage, it binds, it hinders. If you're moving under the principles of law, you're probably failing in your Christian life. You probably try, but fail, and try, but fail, and try, but fail. But the spirit of grace brings liberty. Where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty. That is, power to do God's will. Liberty: Emancipation Proclamation. You are free! You can do what you want to do now, you can do the will of God, you can serve the Lord, and you can have victory over your sin in your life! The spirit of grace gives liberty, freedom, or emancipation to do the will of God. The other brings bondage.

4. The spirit of law is never good enough. Did you ever feel that way? It's never good enough. Well, that's the spirit of the law. You always fail under the spirit of law. The principle of law is always never good enough. You always fell short of it. You maybe got it here, but you lost it here. You gained a little here, but you lost down here. But the spirit of grace is always excited by each step that is taken. The spirit of grace is acceptance, encouragement, praise. Often heard: "If you want to raise your children right, give them about 9 doses of praise, to every 1 dose of correction; then another 9 doses of praise, and then 1 dose of correction." Why? Because the spirit of grace is an encourager, it's always excited by each step that is gained. When you take even a baby step in your Christian life, the grace of God is right there to say, "That's good! That's right! You're going the right way! Keep on going! Don't quit now! Keep on going!" But the spirit of law, when you take one step in the right direction is right there to say, "That's not good enough. You could've done better than that. Why didn't you do it this way? What about your motives?" The spirit of law and the spirit of grace are very different one from another.

5. The spirit of law: Curses. You've failed. Judgment is coming! There's a payment due for that which you did wrong! You failed! But the spirit of grace blesses, and shows the way to victory, even in total failure. The spirit of grace comes along and says, "There's a way out! Get up! God will help you! Keep on going!" Ah, but the spirit of the law comes along side of one who fell and curses, and brings judgment, and tries to

make the load heavier on top of them. Big difference between the two.

6. The spirit of law is critical, always finding something wrong. It's a little bit like "never good enough," but I think it's worthy of a point in itself. The spirit of law is critical. It's always finding something wrong. But the spirit of grace gives the benefit of the doubt. The benefit of the doubt? I thought of these verses over in 1 Corinthians 13 where it's giving a definition of love, and it says of love (among other things): "Love hopeth all things, and believeth all things." Love gives the benefit of the doubt. Love believes in the other. Love hopes the best of the other. The spirit of grace gives the benefit of the doubt, rather than looking for something wrong, trying to find something to put a finger on it, and being critical. If the grace of God is stirring in the heart of an individual, the first response will be, "Oh, there must be some other explanation," or "Surely, there must have been a reason for that." Wouldn't you like to have the benefit of the doubt? So would your brother, so would your sister, so would your children, so would your wife or husband! Wouldn't you like to have the benefit of the doubt? The spirit of law is critical, always finding something wrong.

7. The spirit of law remembers sin again, and again, and again. Just like in the Old Testament, under the law, they would offer their sacrifice on the Day of Atonement, but a year later they'd have to come back again, and offer it again, and a year later they came back, and offered it again. The spirit of law remembers sin. But the spirit of grace forgets it. "What was that? I don't even remember! What was it you did? I didn't even remember it." The spirit of grace forgets! The spirit of law remembers it, reminds you, reminds you again, reminds you again, and again, and again, and again, and again. The grace of God just forgets it, buried in the deepest sea. Separated as far as the east is from the west, so are my sins separated from me.

8. The spirit of law exposes sin, and then leaves you there. That's all the law could ever do. But the spirit of grace comes along side, and forgives and covers, where we're willing to deal with it. The grace of God will come along side and encourage you to repent, to be forgiven, and to cover it, so that it is gone, so nobody else finds out about it.

9. The spirit of law is rejection. And the spirit of grace is acceptance. Law drives you away. It will drive you away from God, it will drive you away from people, and it will make people want to run away from you. They won't want to be around you. The spirit of law is rejection. But the spirit of grace is acceptance. It says: "Come! Come to God! Come the way you are! Come and be forgiven! Come and be cleansed!"

Probably the greatest motivation of the growth in our Christian life comes from the acceptance that we have of the Heavenly Father, is it not so? I don't know of anything that motivates me more to go on in my Christian life than to know that God accepts me right where I am. I don't mean God accepts sin! But God accepts me right where I am. If I'm clear in my heart, God accepts me. Sure, maybe 6 months from now, He'll begin to show me something else I need to deal with, and I'll see it. But all those 6 months, God was loving me! He was accepting me! He was blessing me! He was encouraging me! That very acceptance caused me to have my heart open, so God could minister to me about another need in my life. The spirit of law makes you want to run away from God, but the spirit of grace makes you want to run to God.

10. The spirit of the law tends to be exclusivist. The spirit of grace is free to all! Hallelujah. "Red, brown, yellow, black and white, they're all precious in His sight!" But not so with law. The principals of law, and those who live after the principals of law, they tend toward being a sect, or they tend toward being an individualist. "This is how I see it, this is the way it's going to be, and I don't care if I have to be by myself, this is the way we're going to do it." It's not that way with the spirit of grace. Rather it says: "Others, Lord,

yes others. Let this my motto be." Quite a difference between the two of those isn't it?

11. The spirit of law has no mercy. When you have failed under the spirit of law, there is no mercy. But under the spirit of grace: there's complete mercy. Release! Forgiveness! Encouragement! Acceptance! Total mercy through the blood of Jesus Christ. Total mercy compared to no mercy, no forgiveness. The spirit of law and the spirit of grace are very different.

12. Under the spirit of law the highest goal is performance. Under the spirit of grace the highest goal is a relationship. The one: performance. The other: relationship. There is a big difference between the two of those! If we are living our lives to perform, and we're basing our acceptance on performance, when we don't measure up we don't feel God's acceptance. Or if we base other's acceptance on performance, when they don't measure up, we don't accept them. Because the highest goal is how you perform. Not so with the spirit of grace. With the spirit of grace the highest goal is relationship. O Lord, help us to see that one.

As I pondered this message, I had to think of many of the plain churches, and how they are so much on the performance side. If you come among them and you don't look quite right, or you say "kids" instead of "children," or a few things like that, there is this silent, mysterious wall that comes up. It comes up because of the theology of performance, and you didn't perform right so things don't go right. But let the grace of God come over our hearts as individuals, and as a church with relationship as the highest goal. Relationship with the God of Heaven, relationship with God's people, and relationship with a lost and dying world out there!

There is a big difference between the spirit of law and the spirit of grace if you come and visit a church like that! The one you'll go away wondering what happened, not feeling accepted. But the other you'll go away saying, "They loved me! They accepted me just the way I am! I want to go back again! There's something magnetic about those people!" I tell you what it is: it's magnetic because it's like God. That's exactly the way God is with every one of us. God wants a relationship with us! That's number one! He'll walk with us when we have long hair! And He'll walk with us before we get rid of our cigarettes! He'll walk with us when we're failing in this area. He'll walk with us when we're not as meek and quiet as we ought to be! And He'll walk with us when we're not as modest as we ought to be! Because number one on God's list is a relationship!

We have to be the same way, because it's godliness to be like God. Amen? So it's godly to accept somebody right where they are. It's godly to come up and put your arm around some fellow who has long hair who's born again for only 2 weeks. It's godly to come up and put your arm around him and bless him, and encourage him, and accept him, and love him. It's God-like to do that. In the law, the highest goal is performance. We all come up with our own levels of performance, "You had better measure up with my level of performance..."

I had to think this one comes pretty close to home when you begin to ponder our children. I think we need to have some performance in our minds, I am not against that. But let number one be relationship. I don't know anything that motivates a child to do what Mama and Papa say more than a sweet relationship with Mama and Papa! Nothing! But oh, the burden of a little child whose father and mother move under the principals of law, and sets up the rules of performance, and withdraw their acceptance, and their blessing, and their encouragement when the performance isn't what it ought to be. Poor child. That child's view of God will be very mixed up.

13. The spirit of law tends to details. The spirit of grace tends to flexibility. What do I mean by that? Well, I guess a good way to put it is: The Letter of the Law vs. The Spirit of the Law. You know letter of the law. We can follow the Pharisees, and study Jewish history, and it doesn't take us long to find out what the spirit of law does if you leave it by its self. It will make up 5,000 Sabbath rules over the course of about 200-300 years, of things you should do and shouldn't do. It'll make a thick book to read so you can learn how to behave on the Sabbath! But in the spirit of grace is the principal, and in principal is flexibility. There is a big difference between the two of those. Law tends to details. You'll do it this way, down to the detail. You'll wear these, you'll part your hair here, you'll wear this kind of covering, you'll wear black shoes and only black shoes. The principals of law tend toward details, but the spirit of grace, or the principals of grace, tends toward flexibility. There is flexibility on how it's lived out.

14. The spirit of law tends to be negative. The spirit of grace tends to be positive. If you're one who struggles with being negative I would encourage you to take a study of the Gospels and study the Pharisees. Do a study on the Pharisees in light of this whole matter of negative, doubtful, unbelief. You'll find an answer to your need. Because the principal of law tends toward the negative, that's just the way it is. Because you can never measure up, and there's no faith where there's law. They can't dwell together! Where there's a spirit of grace, there's this positive, faith-filled, encouraged, up-lifted look toward the God of Heaven, trusting Him in the circumstances of life.

15. And last of all, we said it already but I think its worth making it a point. The spirit of law is like a Pharisee. The spirit of grace is like Jesus. Consider this: the Law creates rebellion, stirs up the flesh, and drains spiritual life. I don't know how many times a brother or a sister who has been born again--I mean one of those fresh new births, when they're about a month old in the faith--go back to their old church, sit in the service, listen to the message, and when they get out they feel like they need to go to church because all the life has been drained out of them. That is what law does. Read it there in Romans 7. It's supposed to! God gave it so that it would create rebellion, so it would stir up the flesh, so that sin would be revived, so we could see our evil condition. But brothers and sisters, if we're in the grace of God, if we're washed in the Blood of Jesus, if we're no longer walking after the flesh but after the Spirit, we should have no part with any of that which the law does, but rather the spirit of grace working in our heart to produce a holy life. I know that we'd all have to agree, that the end result of grace is always higher than the end result of law--always! It will always be higher; it will always reach higher than law.

Which Spirit are You Living In?

These issues came up over and over during the revival. In some cases we had to conclude, and give very clear counsel: "You are living under the principles of law, rather than the principals of grace!" In following after the principles of grace there's liberty, there's power, there's strength, there's overcoming ability. But in going after the principals of law, it's just not there. You don't have it. It won't be there. It can't be there! It is contrary to God's law for it to be there! Are you living after principles of law, or principles of grace?

Think with me just a moment here. What kind of person do you want to be? Do you want to be one who encourages, one who gently reproves, one out of whose life flows liberty, grace, and power? One who's always excited when somebody else takes a little step forward? One who blesses those around you? One who gives the benefit of the doubt? One who's willing to forget sin? One who encourages people to be forgiven, and repent, and have their sins completely covered? One who accepts and blesses? One who's free and open, and reaches out to all? One who has complete mercy toward others around them? One who's flexible? One who's highest goal is relationship? One who's positive and filled with faith? One who is

like Jesus?

Or, would you rather be one who's always demanding? Condemning? Heaping failure on others? Bringing bondage upon them? One who is never satisfied? One who's never good enough? One who breathes curses, judgment, and payment due? One who's critical? One who remembers sin again, and again, and again? One who exposes sin, but then just leaves them set? One who has rejection coming forth out of his life? One who tends toward the exclusivist rather than an openness to those around them? One who has no mercy? One who's highest goal is performance? One who tends to the details, and they're very important to you and if the details aren't right you get frustrated inside? "I'm not free. I come to church, lose my joy, my blessing, because the details are really more important to me than the relationships." One who's negative? One who's like a Pharisee? You see, the difference between the two of these is very big, and they have to affect our relationships.

I realized, as I meditated on this message, that most likely nobody here is going to fit into one category or the other. But let us be open before the Lord, and allow the Spirit of God to reveal to us how we are operating. How do we operate with our children? How do we operate with our brothers and sisters? What kind of eye do we have when we look around us? How do we relate to a lost and dying world? You know there are those who look around them and say, "They don't want it, they're gospel hardened, it's too high for them, and nobody wants to pay the price anymore." I tell you, that is the spirit of law. They have theologized it so bad, that they haven't done anything for decades.

The Remedy for Living Under the Law

Which one do we want to be? What is the answer to this problem? Well, there is an answer. If you say, "Oh, that's me! That's exactly how I find myself! Those are the very struggles that I have in my heart!" There is an answer, hallelujah! Here's what to do:

1. Acknowledge where you're at. It is the first step to victory every time. Just acknowledge, "That's where I'm at!"
2. Repent. Turn away from it. See it for what it is, and turn away from it!
3. Establish your heart in grace. Yes, the same old answer! Walk in the grace of God, be filled with the Spirit, move in the Spirit of God, and walk after the dictates of the Spirit of God rather than the dictates of your flesh. Put off religion, and put on Christ! Put off the doing, and put on the being. You'll find yourself beginning to think differently, respond differently, talk differently, and share differently. You'll be a little grace of God going amidst the congregation. You'll be a little grace of God in your home, guiding your children onward and forward, encouraging them, blessing them. You'll be a little grace of God moving around in the congregation, walking out in the world around you. And rather than seeing someone and wanting to heap judgment and condemnation on them, you'll be one who comes along side and says, "You know, there's a way out of this! There's a way out! There's an answer for your problem! I know what it is! Listen to me!"

How The Law Affects Child Training

When I think of this whole matter of being established with principles of law rather than principles of grace, I have to think about children. I can not get away from it; it haunts me. I guess the reason is I get a lot of letters from around the country from people who've listened to "The Godly Home" tapes, but they've

approached it from a law point of view, rather than a grace point of view. And they see, "Well the answer to this whole thing is to make a bunch of rules for my children. The answer to this whole matter of my children is to spank the child every time the child is wrong, and the answer to this whole thing is for me to get stricter on my children." Somehow as they listened to all those tapes, they missed the grace that was in there, and they only came up with the law of the matter. And then they try it and it doesn't work, and then they write me letters. They're totally frustrated, and they say things like, "I don't know what to do. I spank my children and spank my children, and spank my children, and they're only getting worse!"

I've spent many hours pondering those letters, trying to figure out what is going wrong, and I believe that I have found the answer. They're approaching the whole matter of raising their children from the principle of law, rather than the principle of grace. Remember, the highest goal of the law is performance, and the highest goal of grace is relationship. They have not built a relationship with those children. They've only laid down some rules and told them, "Now Brother Denny says this in his tape and you're going to do this, and you're going to do this, and if you don't, you're going to get a spanking!" That's not grace. Grace builds a relationship, grace moves in love, grace moves with encouragement, and blessing, and praise. Yes, sometimes grace comes in and corrects and disciplines, but then it moves right back into the area of relationship, and blessing, and encouragement. May God enlighten our hearts both with our relationships to our children, and with the relationships we have with one another, and with the world around us.

Remember, law and grace affect the way you view God, the way you view yourself, and the way you view people around you.

Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/denny-kenaston/the-spirit-of-law-and-the-spirit-of-grace/>

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