

WitnessKit 3

God and Worldviews

Class 13

Realism In Demonstrating God's
Character, Law Versus Legalism,
Isolation And Balance

From *The God Who
Is There*

Copyright 2013 Vera Philologus all rights
reserved

A Verse to Read Together

Romans 12:2 “And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect.”

(We renew our minds through reading God’s word regularly.)

Francis Schaeffer said, "As we

Turn to consider in more detail how we may speak to men of the twentieth century, we must emphasize first of all that we cannot apply mechanical rules. We, of all people, should realize this, for as Christians we believe that personality really does exist and is important. We can lay down some general principles, but there can be no automatic application. If we are truly personal, as created by God, then each individual will differ from everyone else.

Schaeffer on Apologetics...

...Therefore each man must be dealt with as an individual, not as a case or a statistic or machine. If we would work with these people, we cannot mechanically apply the things of which we have been speaking in this book. We must look to the Lord in prayer, and to the work of the Holy Spirit, for effective use of these things."

David Geisler suggests using

Apologetics in witnessing to encourage someone **to surface the truth for themselves.**

Encourage them by asking good questions.

Apologetics *as a study* is valuable so *that* you will know the next thing the other person needs to know, after listening to them. With the help of God's Holy Spirit, you can think of a question to ask them that will help them discover the truth they need. Rather than telling them the next thing, you help them think of it themselves.

Example, from APOLOGETICS FOR A NEW GENERATION, 2009.

David Geisler listened to a Buddhist woman talk about how great Buddhism is for about 15 minutes. Buddhism teaches that losing all desire is a virtue or a worthy goal.

David asked her this question, "Don't you desire good things for your children?"

The Question Built a Bridge.

Then he asked her if she knew what Jesus taught about desire—“That man’s problem is not to give up on desire, but to have the right desire. Christians believe that when we invite Christ to come into our life, He changes us from the inside out so that we no longer desire to do the bad things; instead we desire to do the good things that He wants us to do.”

Build a Heart Bridge

This created what he calls a "Positive Heart Bridge." A question may create doubt about a previously held belief, and it should be asked in a gentle way to minimize defensiveness. Then it should create a desire to hear more.

Another part of the picture...

- If we wish to reach other people in our sphere of influence, we need to live consistent lives before them.
- We do not have to live PERFECT lives before them... if we wait for that possibility we will NEVER reach out to anyone. But we do have to apologize when we mess up. And we have to walk close enough to the LORD to know when we mess up. We have to avoid repetitive blunders.
- Schaeffer described that need in these terms...

We who are Bible-Believing Christians

Matters of Spiritual Consistency

should live consistently with our beliefs.

To do so we need realistic consistency with our assumptions:

1. Realism in demonstrating God's character: not just in theory, but in practice
2. Repairing the Damage of the Fall
3. Communion
4. Community
5. Personality

You cannot please everybody.

- Some people will not be reachable by you. Even the Apostle Paul was forbidden by the LORD to go to a certain region of Asia, and was sent to another place. And a great number of people were so displeased with Paul that they started riots or sent him to jail.
- Your value as a witness for Christ is not measured by how pleased people are with you.
- Reaching out must be from a base of pleasing God. God is pleased when our characters are faithful to His righteousness.

Realism in demonstrating God's character:

Apologetics is the practice of genuine, objective truth. The truth about God is that He is real, and He is GOOD. We are sinful human beings, but when we have Him in our lives, we have a new Source of power to do what is good.

As we renew our minds before Him on a regular basis, He will help us remember and practice His goodness.

Repairing the Damage of the Fall

When humans fell into sin, alienation took place. First came alienation from a perfect holy God, then alienation from person to person, then alienation within oneself, and alienation with nature. The new life in Christ, with His indwelling Holy Spirit, heals these things, now in part, and in heaven completely.

Repairing the Damage of the Fall

Receiving Christ's righteousness based on the total, once-for-all payment He made on the cross to take away sins, and the power of His resurrection, produces Justification. Jesus justifies us with God. That justification is complete at the point of true repentance and faith. That healing of alienation with God takes place NOW. What an amazing blessing!

Repairing the Damage of the Fall

Do we become perfect at that point? *Yes and no.* Yes, in terms of being sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise, and in terms of the way God sees us through Christ, holy and blameless—Ephesians chapter 1.

No, in terms of living in a fallen world, with the temptations and difficulties of life and a human nature that is fallen—I John chapter 1—so that we must continually *resist temptation* and face and *repent of new sins* and *receive forgiveness*. And God cleanses us of every sin as we walk by faith.

Repairing the Damage from the Fall

Schaeffer's term is SUBSTANTIAL healing. Not perfectionism, but substantial change for the better.

And that includes healing of alienation among people, and within oneself, and with nature.

A true church will show these characteristics. People will be real, not wearing masks and playing power games. There will be a quality of concern for one another and acceptance of one another.

Repairing the Damage from the Fall

In any church, there will be some people who are what Jesus described as “tares among the wheat” and there will be some who appear to be “tares” but are really “wheat in an immature stage.” Jesus said we must not try to weed out the tares for fear of weeding out the immature wheat. That means that a church should be patient with those who are not acting properly, but should not allow them to take charge, either.

Repairing the Damage from the Fall

A true church will reveal God's character—including His hatred of evil, His love for righteousness, His patience with fallen human beings, His encouragement to strive toward what is truly good.

It will be a loving group of people that encourage one another toward good and help one another. The true church will reveal His kindness and His truth.

Repairing the Damage from the Fall



In many parts of the world, governments try to tame the church and arrange to take over the leadership with undercover employees of the government. Or the governing authorities may attempt to use the church to maintain control of the population. In some instances, governments have taken over for the purpose of identifying true Christians, and this is followed by persecution of those individuals.

Repairing the Damage from the Fall



Clearly, under such circumstances, the true church is not the entire congregation, but is the believing group within the congregation. In such instances, Christians are even more in need of the guidance of God's Holy Spirit so that the church as a whole can still survive and thrive.

Jesus tells us to be "wise as serpents and innocent as doves." Character is foundational to survival, and so is discernment.

We who are Bible-Believing Christians

Matters of Spiritual Consistency

should live consistently with our beliefs.
To do so we need realistic consistency with our assumptions:

1. Realism in demonstrating God's character: not just in theory, but in practice
2. Repairing the Damage of the Fall
3. Communion
4. Community
5. Personality

Communion

True, Bible believing Christians who are living their faith will have communion with the living God, and they will be able to talk about it. It will not be an “incommunicable” existential experience. It will have content. When they meditate, they will meditate upon His word. That means to mull over the concepts until they become helpful for one’s own set of circumstances.

When they sing and pray, they will mean it.

Communion



Communion with God and with other believers in group worship requires a discipline of setting aside the distractions of life. A regular routine of Bible study and prayer can help train the mind toward being able to focus. Scripture memorization can aid in this as well.

Seeking God in everyday matters is a form of communion with Him. He is pleased when we ask His help even for ordinary matters.

We who are Bible-Believing Christians

Matters of Spiritual Consistency

should live consistently with our beliefs. To do so we need realistic consistency with our assumptions:

1. Realism in demonstrating God's character: not just in theory, but in practice
2. Repairing the Damage of the Fall
3. Communion
4. Community
5. Personality

Community



Community will mean real fellowship—not just small talk. It will mean bearing one another's burdens, and sympathizing with one another's weaknesses, yet without condoning wrong. The world does not know how to do those things. The world either judges or condones, and allows the irritations among differing personalities to win the day. The world establishes hierarchies of value among people.

Community

A true church community will be a family of brothers and sisters who really do care about each other, and who want the best for each other.

A true church community attempts to follow God's commands regarding missions, helping the poor, evangelism, worship, teaching, discipleship, giving, healing—not necessarily “spectacular healing,” but ordinary, substantial healing, where counsel from God's word is a great help.

Community

- A true church community will make a difference in the issues of the day, from divorce to abortion to hunger relief to unemployment. People with wisdom to address such problems will have the opportunity.
- A true church community recognizes each other's spiritual gifts, and affirms their use.
- When a local church has a divorce rate that is an ongoing crisis, they will seek God's help to meet the crisis, rather than ignoring the problem, for example.

Schaeffer said, "*And yet the Word*

Of God does not leave us with a romantic notion that we must either have total perfection in this life or, if not, that we must smash everything and have nothing. I am firmly convinced that many wonderful things have been destroyed because people have had a preconceived and romantic notion in their minds as to what the perfect thing should be, would settle for nothing else, and thus have smashed what could have been."

We who are Bible-Believing Christians

Matters of Spiritual Consistency

should live consistently with our beliefs. To do so we need realistic consistency with our assumptions:

1. Realism in demonstrating God's character: not just in theory, but in practice
2. Repairing the Damage of the Fall
3. Communion
4. Community
5. Personality

Personality

None of our outreach should be done with a “routine sales pitch to customer” mentality. **Our personalities matter.** We are not “emotion machines” where somebody pulls a lever and an emotion pops out. Nobody has a right to treat others that way. If we care about each other, we will not take manipulative approaches. We will seek God’s direction as we try to help each other. Even when we know exactly what someone needs, we will seek a respectful and kind approach for conveying the information.

Personality

- Our apologetic begins with **Personality**—with the **Personal God who is there**.
- The world's perspective makes people machines or animals or zeros, or puppets on strings. **God says** we are His creation, made in His image, of infinite value.
- Our outreach needs to communicate that truth. We need to start at the beginning.

Apologetics is valuable

And thought-provoking. We must consider thoughtfully adding it to our religious routine. It has to become integrated with our thinking to be available when we need it in conversation.

Incorporation of Apologetics

In the Sunday School requires careful thought. The study of apologetics helps everyone to build faith, and to be better able to talk to others about God. **When people come to Sunday School, they are at different stages of spiritual growth.** It is important for individuals at different stages to never have to “unlearn” what was taught before.

Don't teach “the tooth fairy,” or other traditional folklore in Sunday school! Don't waste the time on ideas the students will need to UNLEARN.

Apologetic ideas can be added

To Sunday School lessons. Apologetics courses can be made available to Sunday School teachers, who can then use ideas in class.

For example, a Christmas lesson can incorporate an explanation of how God helped people know Jesus was His Son, with multiple witnesses such as Elizabeth and the shepherds and the wise men and the elderly workers in the temple.

Students in biology class in school can be given information on intelligent design when they are in that level of Sunday School.

Apologetic ideas can be added...



Children's classes can have good books in the classroom such as *Dinosaurs*, *Those Terrible Lizards*, which explain fossil formation and dinosaurs from the standpoint of creation—available from the Institute for Creation Research, ICR.org.

Churches can host seminars and book fairs from various apologetics organizations,.

Even special holiday events for the community can have apologetics materials available for view.

At some point in the curriculum,

A structured doctrinal course needs to be taught.

We need to shift gears from a “bits and pieces with personal application” approach

- to an approach that builds a framework for understanding. Just prior to high school or early high school would be a good time for this.

- The WitnessKit Bible Study is an example course.

- Students need to begin understanding the complexity of thought within the Bible. If we only strive to simplify, they fail to see the challenging and lifelong learning wisdom in the book.

At some point in the curriculum,

- ▣ Structured apologetics courses can also be available—and early career and university level classes would be a good time to host such courses.
- All of us encounter people who are skeptical. It is a great help to have answers or to at least KNOW the answers exist when those individuals challenge our faith.

Ideas and words drift over time.

It is important to teach doctrine and apologetics so that students can navigate the drift that will occur over their lifetimes.

In *The God Who Is There*

- Dr. Schaeffer covered a cultural drift over the centuries in the ideas of ***law*** and ***grace***.
- The cultural or philosophical use of these terms in Europe became very different from the Biblical use of the terms.
- When we lose the meaning of words, we lose the ideas they transmit.
- These terms are so tremendously important in understanding the Bible, that we want to spend some time on their Biblical use.

In order to reach our generation

Law Versus Legalism

We must thoroughly understand and be able to communicate the difference between Law and legalism.

1. Law must be understood before Grace can be understood.
2. Law alone deteriorates into legalism.
3. Grace is essential.

**Law must be understood before
Grace can be understood.**

Moral Standards are real, because God is real, and because God is good. We are not talking about opinion when we discuss the Ten Commandments **or the commands to love God with all our heart and soul and mind and strength and to love our neighbor as ourselves.**

Law Must Be Understood.

Morals are real. Morals based on God's Law are GOOD. Morals based on God's Law are safe boundaries, life-affirming boundaries, and boundaries that bring fulfillment.

Marriage is good. Marriage is the proper place for sexuality to be expressed, and that in the true commitment of mutual love. Marriage is a form of life support in all its stages, from the first day of the honeymoon to the retirement home and beyond. God's rules about marriage are GOOD rules.

People want to bend God's moral Law.

- When the difficulties of living in a fallen world make keeping God's moral law difficult, people want to say "This is impossible, so it cannot be true."
- God's moral law includes some things that ARE impossible—such as "loving one's neighbor as oneself" WHEN one's neighbor is an enemy. Jesus spent the sermon on the mount in Matthew chapters 5, 6, and 7 pointing out how really difficult the Law is if you keep it from the heart.

LAW

The discovery of the impossibility of the (heart's) Moral Law should not lead to a conclusion that “The Moral Law must not be true.” Instead, it should lead to the conclusion that ...

- “THEREFORE I need God’s help to keep it.”
- That discovery is a necessary step toward finding God’s grace.

In addition, we must **not** go overboard...

We must not make actions into sins that are not sinful. The Bible's boundaries are plenty strict, without adding MORE rules and regulations that are beyond human reach. As God said in Deuteronomy 30:11 “For this commandment which I command you today is not too difficult for you, nor is it out of reach. It is not up in heaven, that you should say, ‘Who will go up to heaven...

Deuteronomy 30:11

...for us to get it for us and make us hear it, that we may observe it?’ Nor is it beyond the sea, that you should say, ‘Who will cross the sea for us to get it for us and make us hear it, that we may observe it?’ But the word is very near you, in your mouth and in your heart, that you may observe it. See, I have set before you today life and prosperity, and death and adversity, in that I command you today to love the LORD your God, to walk in His ways and to keep His commandments and His statutes...

Deuteronomy 30:11

And His judgments, that you may live and multiply, and that the LORD your God may bless you in the land where you are entering to possess it.”

God’s universal moral law is not out of reach. We can keep it if we try—at least outwardly—but there is a catch. In our own human nature, we often do not want to try.

Our motives matter. God sees our hearts.

Law must be understood before Grace can be understood.

There is a plumb line and level that God will use to judge every thought, word, intention, and action. Scoffing and falsehood are no refuge. God will make **justice the plumb line and righteousness the level**, and the refuge of lies will be swept away—Isaiah 28:17. The plumb line and level form a cross. Every sin in human history was suffered by Messiah on the cross. He knows them all. He will be the judge. “The iniquities of us all were laid on Him.” Isaiah 53.

In order to reach our generation

Law Versus Legalism

We must thoroughly understand and be able to communicate the difference between Law and legalism.

1. Law must be understood before Grace can be understood.
2. Law alone deteriorates into legalism.
3. Grace is essential.

Law alone deteriorates into legalism.

We can set boundaries for our own lives in accordance with God's laws, and that will be beneficial to us and to everyone in our sphere of influence.

But if that is all we know about communion with God, that is an empty shell. It is right to obey God. It is MUCH MORE right to obey God because we love Him. We love Him because He loves us, *and we can believe Him when He says He loves us.*

Law alone deteriorates into legalism.

We can obey God out of fear, and that IS a good starting point.

We can obey God out of love, and that is even better.

We need to spend time with our focus on Him in order to sense His love for us. We love Him because He first loved us—1 John 4:19. That means we have to learn about His grace.

Schaeffer said,

“In marriage, in the church, and in other human relationships, the same thing applies—the proper legal relationship must be there, but if it is static, it becomes a dusty monument.”

In order to reach our generation

Law Versus Legalism

We must thoroughly understand and be able to communicate the difference between Law and legalism.

1. Law must be understood before Grace can be understood.
2. Law alone deteriorates into legalism.
3. Grace is essential.

Grace is essential.

We have to understand this about God: He prefers mercy to judgment—James 2:8-13, Ezekiel 18:1-32. His mercy is **STRONGLY** conditional. It is conditioned upon repentance.

He wants to listen to us. He wants to guide us. He wants to be our Forever Friend and heavenly Father as well as our King. He was willing to suffer in our place to make that goal possible. **He loves us more than we can imagine.**

He loves to give us His righteousness.

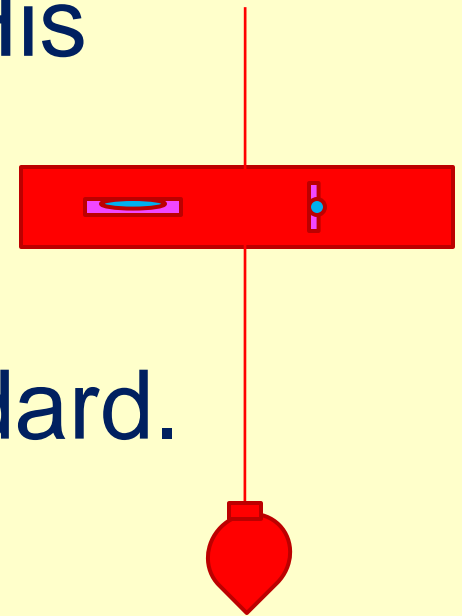
Jeremiah 23:5-6 Describes Messiah in 2 ways:

“Behold, the days are coming,” declares the LORD, “When I shall raise up for David a righteous Branch; And He will reign as **King** and act wisely, and do justice and righteousness in the land. In His days Judah will be saved, and Israel will dwell securely; And this is His name by which He will be called, The LORD our Righteousness.”

Messiah is THE LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS

Because He gives us His perfect righteousness when we repent of our sins and receive His atonement. His justice is the plumb line. His righteousness is the level.

Notice that a plumb line and
A level make a perfect standard.



Grace

Law is God's tutor to bring us to Christ, to Messiah—Galatians 3:23-29. We need Law for its practical benefits, but the most important reason we need Law is to bring us to Grace.

If we think we can keep the Law in our own strength, we do not know ourselves very well. The Sermon on the Mount, in Matthew chapters 5 – 7 elaborates, and helps us see how impossible the Law really is—especially to keep from the heart.

It is a paradox that the Law is

Both simple and impossible, straightforward and beyond human endurance.

The Law is good. But Who shall deliver me from this *death* of not being able to keep it? The answer is Jesus Christ. He delivers us so that there is no condemnation for those who take refuge in Him.

See Romans chapters 7 and 8.

Grace, *Charis*, χαρις: Joy, *Chara*, χαρα

Grace is the gift of God's righteousness to those who repent and accept His atonement for sins, and it is a gift that He finds joy in giving to us.

Jesus accepted and endured the suffering of the cross **for the joy that was set before Him**—Hebrews 12:2. It was a matter of infinite joy to Him when He conquered death and hell for us. Now He waits to give us His righteousness when we ask Him to be our Lord.

Grace

If we have received God's grace, we can share it. When we are walking in grace, we will express the truth in love. We will care about people as individuals. We will not demand perfection, but we will expect the best. We will love what is good and hate evil. We will hate evil even while loving enemies, and that requires the power of the Holy Spirit.

The worse the enemies, the more we must depend upon the Holy Spirit.

We need apologetics as a bridge

Wall or
Bridge?

Between isolation in our own circle of faith and the thinking of the world at large.

1. Apologetics is not a wall to shut ourselves off from the world.
2. Apologetics is a bridge to build from our world to the world at large.

Apologetics is not a wall to shut ourselves off from the world.

- Apologetics SHOULD strengthen our faith, but not for the purpose of isolating ourselves.
- It should strengthen our faith for the purpose of reaching out to others. It should make us more capable of lovingly discussing truth in a world that cannot find it.
- It should make us more discerning of where people are in their thought world, so that we can meet them where they are.

Apologetics is a bridge to build from our world to the world at large.

When we use apologetics to reach out to other people, we will pay attention to their beliefs. We must balance the truth we know with their understanding of the world and find a way for the two to meet.

If we give them a truth they do not understand or that they misunderstand because of worldview barriers, our effort will not do any good.

If we give them truth that is already a basic part of their worldview, we may waste an opportunity to give them what they need next.

Apologetics Comes in Many Forms.



The Bible is a remarkable book, speaking with universality to every generation, yet set in history that can be researched. It is different from all other religious books. Apologetics involves instilling confidence in the Bible.

Another part of apologetics involves clarifying the beliefs of the individual, and showing where they logically lead. This does no good if we are not prepared to show how the Biblical system leads to a better answer.

Two Kinds of Lostness

Another part of apologetics means understanding two kinds of lostness—moral alienation before a Holy God, and also the perceived lostness of having a purposeless life. **Both kinds of lostness need God's help.** A person can be totally oblivious of moral lostness, if his worldview says objective universals do not exist. We can talk about the kind of lostness he does understand as a bridge to conversation about the other kind.

Two Kinds of Faith

The existentialist leap of faith that says “I believe” while saying it really does not matter what is true—that kind of faith is very different from Biblical faith.

Biblical faith says “I can trust God, because He really is there, He really cares, He made the path of righteousness available to me, and I can search until I find it.”

Biblical Faith

Says truth matters. God wants us to believe only what is true. We can search for truth, and find it, and believe it, and that will please God.

God is completely good. He wants to be our Lord, not out of a desire to treat us as puppets on strings, because He did not make us that way. He could have, but He chose to make us in His image instead, with real choices. God wants us to choose Him as our Lord because He wants us to love what is good and hate what is evil. He wants us to choose Him because we love Him.

Accepting God's Right...

To be our King is a good thing. We sometimes think it robs us of autonomy, in the manner of making us His puppets, but that is NOT the case. *It makes us better than we are or can be on our own.* It gives us access to His thinking, and His guidance, and sometimes His discipline when we deserve it, but we still make real choices. His Kingly Authority sets some boundaries, but accepting His authority willingly brings His help for staying inside those boundaries.

Accepting God's Right...

- To be King leads to eternal reward. The basic issues in salvation are repentance, atonement, faith, and a choice of citizenship. When we choose God as our King, we are choosing heavenly citizenship. **“God calls us into His own kingdom and glory.”** | Thessalonians 2:12.
- The King gets to be in charge. We place our lives and eternal future in His hands. That's the best place to be.
- God's Holy Spirit is the One who helps us make those choices. He draws us toward God.

All truth is God's truth.



Not all truth is easy to see and understand.
Thank you for making the effort to study apologetics in this course. It is a great pleasure to present the material.

This wraps up the study of *The God Who Is There*.

Promises From the Good Shepherd, Ezekiel 34:11-31

Thus says the LORD God,
“I Myself
Will search for My sheep.
I will deliver them
From all the places
Where they were scattered
On a cloudy, gloomy day.

Promises From the Good Shepherd, Ezekiel 34:11-31

I will bring them out.

I will gather them.

I will bring them home.

I will feed them--

in good pasture

by streams of water.

I will lead them to rest....

Promises From the Good Shepherd, Ezekiel 34:11-31

I will seek the lost.

I will bring back the scattered.

I will bandage the broken.

I will strengthen the sick.

I will feed the wicked—with judgment.

I will remove the trampers who cause harm.

My flock will no longer be in danger.

My Son will be their Shepherd.

I will make them a blessing.

I am with them and they are Mine.

Homework

3 sets

Homework Lesson 13 Day 1

- For the next few days, we need to use our Bible study portion to look at a Biblical definition of law and grace. It should be clear from the material we have already read in THE GOD WHO IS THERE that the cultural definitions of law and grace drifted over time from the Biblical concepts. These are both extremely important ideas in the Bible, and we must not let cultural concepts cover them over or cloud their meaning. Because these ideas are so important, please pray for the Holy Spirit to renew your mind as you study.

Homework Lesson 13 Day 1

- We have talked about law in terms of moral universals and cultural particulars, borrowing from Greek categories for understanding. These Greek categories are helpful.
- Because Christianity applies to all people all over the world, its ideas transcend cultural particulars, yet the individual who lives within one culture must *apply the universals* within particular understandings of his own culture. This can be a challenge.
- Two of the beautiful effects of having the indwelling Holy Spirit, are that He helps us see clearly in God's perspective, and He helps us have the power to obey the spirit of the law.

Homework Lesson 13 Day 1

- Read Romans chapters seven and eight.
- The present young adult generation in the West has two enormous difficulties in understanding and perceiving the spirit of the law. First, their generational culture tells them contradictory things. It tells them they cannot know eternal truths, and that the moral universals do not exist, and that the role models they see on television are ok, as they live and choose oblivious to spiritual matters.

Homework Lesson 13 Day 1

- In addition, their culture tells them that good people must obey all kinds of arbitrary detailed laws and rules, from avoiding trans-fat to exercising, to the style of allowable recycle bin, to curfew times, and that good people must have certain political attitudes.
- If you watch over time, those attitudes are arbitrary and will shift dramatically.

Homework Lesson 13 Day 1

- They are expected to behave as masses in regard to their beliefs about right and wrong, and to adopt the attitudes of the group, no matter what those attitudes are.
- How do they cut through all the particulars that face them in issue after issue, to even see the universals? Especially when they are taught that the universals do not exist.

Homework Lesson 13 Day 1

- The answer is found in Romans chapter seven and eight. We do not have to figure all this out all by ourselves. The moral confusion of our time is not too difficult for God.
- God's Holy Spirit wants to help us. God gave us His word to help us as well. His word is consistent, and we can study it with His help, to find out the difference between universals and particulars AND between law and grace.
- It is a lifelong study, because each issue will have to be considered in the light of God's word, but the basic idea is available today.

Homework Lesson 13 Day 1

What positive action are we to take according to Romans 8:5-6? What do verses 9 and 14-15 of chapter 8 say about the Holy Spirit?

- According to verse 16, how is that relationship confirmed? What are some aspects of God's grace revealed by these chapters?
- Bear in mind that the overcoming grace that God gives may not bring approval from people. See I Peter 4:1-5. What did the overcoming of evil bring in this example?
- Where will the injustice of that be corrected?
- What is God's purpose in delaying His judgment of them, according to the next verse? How does He describe the ones committing the wrong?

Homework Lesson 13 Day 1

- What was one purpose of the Law, according to Romans 7:7?
- How does Romans 8:7 describe the mind that is set on the flesh?
- How does Galatians 5:19-21 describe the actions of “the flesh?”
- Read Matthew 5:17-19. Does obeying the spirit of the Law mean disobeying the letter of the Law?
- What did Jesus come to earth to do?
- Given that Jesus fulfilled God’s Law, His life in the gospels serves as an example of decision making under God’s Law. For example, Jesus healed people on the Sabbath. He kept the Sabbath holy.

Homework Lesson 13 Day 1

- Jesus emphasized the value of human life in healing on the Sabbath, and that is consistent with keeping the Sabbath holy, and it is consistent with keeping the two greatest commandments, and it is consistent with provisions in the letter of Old Testament law that allow rescues to be performed on the Sabbath.
- Read Romans chapter 14. This was written to a Gentile readership who may not have had the option of a Sabbath day off from work. How does it deal with Sabbath keeping/ holiday keeping?

Law and Grace

- How does the matter of conscience enter the discussion in Romans chapter 14?
- The chapter does not address the slavery issue in this chapter, but the majority of people in the Roman Empire were slaves. Do you see how the equality of people before God is part of the equation regarding law and grace? How does particular circumstance affect the application of moral universals? Do you see that universals apply to all individuals and are a reflection of human equality before God?

Law and Grace

- How does Isaiah 56 apply Sabbath Keeping to Gentile believers? What promise does God give about this?
- Compare Isaiah 56 and Romans 14. Use the comparison to help you identify the universal aspects of Sabbath Keeping.

Homework Lesson 13 Day 1

Read Section Six Chapter One in THE GOD WHO IS THERE -- “Demonstrating the Character of God.” This chapter covers the topic of living consistently under grace. Salvation occurs on an individual basis, as each person repents of his sins and receives the atoning work of Christ. However, it is demonstrated also on a group basis, within the local organization called the church.

- What are the divisions that took place when humankind fell in the Garden of Eden?

Homework Lesson 13 Day 1

- Schaeffer describes the Scriptures as promising healing of all these difficulties and separations, one in the present, and the other two in heaven's kingdom. Which one is healed completely now?
- When are the other two healed substantially, and then completely?
- What are the first and second things Schaeffer cautions us to remember about the healing in the present?

Homework Lesson 13 Day 1

What quality is supposed to be visible to the watching world?

- Schaeffer makes the point that these things cannot be done in our own strength. The standard is God's own perfection of character, living through the actions of His churches in ordinary places, facing ordinary difficulties. His Holy Spirit living within our hearts makes this possible for ordinary people who trust Him and follow the truth.
- This is completely different from perfectionism, which demands detailed perfection from each individual in his own strength, propelled by fear. This is God's perfection shining through imperfect humans as they trust Him and attempt to follow His lead, out of love for Him and love for truth and love for other people.

Homework Lesson 13 Day 1

- God's laws are good. Obeying them is always helpful, even obeying them out of fear. But when we seek to obey because we love Him, trusting Him to supply the power to fulfill the two greatest commandments, His perfect love casts out fear.
- Receiving His grace always requires trusting Him. This is far different from lawlessness, and also far away from legalism, even though obedience is part of the equation.
- How do you think the church can avoid **sounding legalistic** when taking a stand for right over wrong?

Homework Lesson 13 Day 1

- Should the church be perfectionist toward individuals? How can a church balance having proper standards with avoiding perfectionism?
- Are there proper ways to show acceptance and improper ways to show acceptance of sinners, given that all people are sinners?
- The Holy Spirit transforms lives. He does not make us puppets, but He makes us BETTER people. As His people, we must maintain high standards for ourselves, remaining aware of our own frailties, while still welcoming those not yet transformed.

Homework Lesson 13 Day 1

- We have “personality plus.” We have the personality God gave us before birth, and we know it came from His creativity. It is a precious gift that reflects something about Him. We have the “plus” part that He gave when He justified us and sent His Holy Spirit to live within our hearts, to reconcile us to Him and to guide us into all truth, to set us free to do good works according to His plan. The “plus” part reflects Him more clearly. In heaven we will experience complete healing and a perfectly integrated personality without the difficulties of temptations and physical frailties. “It does not yet appear what we shall be, but we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him just as He is.” -- paraphrasing I John 3:2.

Homework Lesson 13 Day 1

- The verb tenses in the Greek throughout the Epistle of First John are instructive here. One of the themes of that letter is that we are all sinners, and we have to face that, and we lie to ourselves if we do not face it. We must repent, initially of all our sins, and then daily as we face daily wrongs. However, if we have the indwelling Holy Spirit, we will not sin continuously – we will have substantial freedom to do what is right in this life. He supplies the resolve and power for good, to keep us from staying stuck in wrongdoing – Philippians 1:6 and 2:13.

Homework Lesson 13 Day 1

- Because the culture has drifted away from the idea of moral standards, many evils have encroached upon modern civilization. It is a blessing to have the Bible to help us recognize evil for what it is. Being in a fog about evil does not help anybody.
- Along with that recognition may come a responsibility to fight against evil. The challenge is to do so in a proper way.
- Improper methods for fighting wrong can entrap the one doing the fighting.

Homework Lesson 13 Day 1

- We need the grace of God when required to fight evil. God's grace provides the wisdom to recognize evil. God's grace provides the wisdom to learn the degree of involvement He wants from each of us in that fight, and to learn, through seasons of prayer, the creative place He has for each of us in the battle that we might not think about ourselves.
- God's grace also reminds us that we must have the humility and concern for our fellow humans to fight evil with the door of forgiveness unlocked – where the repentant one can open the door if he chooses correctly. It is our job to hate evil without loving vengeance – to do justice and to love mercy.

Homework Lesson 13 Day 1

- Read Leviticus 19: 16-17. What does confrontation have to do with loving one's neighbor? What are the boundaries on confrontation in these verses? What role does forgiveness play? Why do you think slander is forbidden?
- Read Matthew 6:9-15. How does forgiveness toward others affect our situation with God?

Does God forgive unrepentant evil? The answer is NO. But that is not between us and another person. That is between the other person and God. If we desire their repentance and wish for God to be able to forgive them, that is right on our part.

Homework Lesson 13 Day 1

The Psalmist said, “No man can by any means redeem his brother -- the redemption is costly.” We are not responsible for the reaction of our neighbor or (in this verse) our brother to our efforts to reconcile him with God, but we are responsible for our attitude toward him. This requires much of us that is not superficial or simplistic or even obvious, and it does not let us avoid the fight against evil if God has called us to it. Justice is a bedrock necessity where there is evil. Mercy is contingent on a profound choice – and we cannot lock the door on the possibility even though it is rare.

- Only God’s grace can give us the balance to fight and care at the same time – to do what is required and to be open to a surprise.

Homework Lesson 13 Day 1

The reason we need to discuss the issue here is a counter-intuitive one. God's Holy Spirit does works of healing within the person who is alienated from himself when that individual begins to forgive others who have wounded him. The refusal to forgive others creates brittleness and susceptibility to negative emotions that block communion with God, within the one who refuses to forgive (as well as within the individual who has unrepentantly done wrong.). Forgiving others opens freedom in prayer. Anyone who attempts to fight evil **NEEDS** freedom in prayer.

Homework Lesson 13 Day 1

Perhaps because God so strongly wants us to see each other as equals before Him, He states that He will not forgive the individual who refuses to forgive others -- Matthew 6:14-15. Our part of the healing process is to seek forgiveness from God when we have done wrong, and to forgive others who have wronged us. If we have wronged others in a way that can be corrected, part of that process is also to make corrections.

- The ones who have wronged us should go through the same process. Even if they NEVER do, we can complete our own part by forgiving them, and God will heal us. Some of us have years and years worth of pain that we need to forgive. The healing process usually is gradual until the whole pile is forgiven.

Homework Lesson 13 Day 1

Sometimes people are alienated from themselves due to a faulty level of blame during childhood. The Holy Spirit can help that person to discern what the right level should have been, to make them able to look at self realistically.

In addition, as the Holy Spirit leads us into all truth, He can help us find resources that explain the issues we need to understand. They will be resources that are consistent with God's word.

God is on the side of healing, not vengeance. Vengeance belongs only to Him and no one else, because His justice is perfect. He will eventually take vengeance against evil in a place called hell. Romans 12:14-21.

Homework Lesson 13 Day 1

- Vengeance often demands that the families or descendants of wrongdoers suffer in retaliation for wrongs in an earlier era.
- God NEVER wants that kind of vengeance. He is very clear that He only approves justice against the party who was at fault—Ezekiel 18.
- In such things as healing race relations, we have to trust God already to deal appropriately with abusive slave-owners in eternity—they have already had to face Him and His justice. Demanding that their descendants suffer now for sins 150 years ago is unjust. God upholds individual justice, not tribal vengeance.

Homework Lesson 13 Day 1

- It is right to seek mercy and healing for oneself and for one's neighbor. It is right to prefer mercy over justice. It is right to uphold moral standards. It is right to uphold righteousness while refusing the trap of perfectionism.
- Law and grace are intertwined. Moral relativism makes both difficult to see.
- What are steps you would recommend to make the ideas of Law and Grace clearer in today's world?

Homework Lesson 13 Day 2

- Now we want to look at the flip side of law and grace -- what is the problem with walking according to law -- depending on our own righteousness -- rather than trusting God's power to transform us?
- Read Galatians chapters 1-3. This book was written during the time of transition when the church, which had begun within the culture of the Jews, was opening to Gentiles around the Roman Empire. The early church had a struggle with understanding which of the Old Testament concerns were universals for all people, and which were particulars for Israel.

Homework Lesson 13 Day 2

- The legalism that became a confusing issue was not merely a matter of treating particulars as universals, but also determining what to depend upon for righteousness.
- Could people initially accept the atonement of Christ, and then depend on themselves for all the rest of the requirements of obedience?
- Could they depend upon themselves to determine what the demands of obedience were?
- And how did the question of motivations fit into the answer?

Homework Lesson 13 Day 2

- According to Galatians chapter 1 verse 4, what motivated Jesus Christ to give Himself for our sins?
- In verses 6-9, how does Paul describe legalism?
- Because legalism is a distortion of something true, it is sometimes difficult to discern. What motivation can lead toward legalism or a distortion of the gospel, according to verse 10 of chapter one?
- In chapter one verse 11 through chapter two verse 9, Paul gives something of his history as a believer. What universal did the apostles James and Peter (Cephas) apply to the Gentiles in verse 10?

Homework Lesson 13 Day 2

- The book of Galatians calls Jewish Christians “the circumcised” and the believers who were slipping into legalism “the party of the circumcision” because they were requiring the keeping of all the Old Testament laws as a means of righteousness, attempting to include the rite of circumcision to become a member of the church.
- This would have been a serious barrier to Gentile adult males. (Many Gentiles were called “God-fearing” who attended early synagogues, but who never joined because of such barriers.)

Homework Lesson 13 Day 2

- The party of the circumcision also expected people to refuse to fellowship with Gentile believers who did not follow the dietary laws -- thus finding fault with Peter for eating with the Gentile Christians.
- In verses 11 - 21, this issue brought a confrontation between the Apostle Peter and the Apostle Paul. Peter was the Apostle to the Jews and Paul was the Apostle to the Gentiles. What was the fellowship requirement that the groups had to meet?

Homework Lesson 13 Day 2

- What was the basis for fellowship?
- Do we live by a different method than the way we were justified?
- Do you get the impression that the Apostle Paul, who wrote the letter, was really upset by this problem?
- How does Paul describe the blessings of Abraham and our relationship to each other in verses 6 - 9 of chapter 3?
- What is the curse of the law?
- How did Christ's death by crucifixion overcome the curse for us?

Homework Lesson 13 Day 2

- What point does the Apostle Paul make about the timing of the promise to Abraham, since it was given before the law was given?
- Then why did God give the law?
- Who is equal before God, according to verses 3:26-29?
- Read Psalm 47:1-9. The understanding that we are the people of the God of Abraham matches the prediction of this Psalm -- a characteristic of God's kingdom in our hearts. This Psalm will be completely fulfilled upon Messiah's unmistakable return, as described in Zechariah 14:3-8, which no mere human could fulfill.

Homework Lesson 13 Day 2

- Read Section Six Chapter 2 in THE GOD WHO IS THERE -- “The Legal, But Not Only the Legal.” Today, most people face a different problem than the Galatians were facing, because our culture has become trapped in the confusion of moral relativism. To some degree, we have to understand law before we can understand grace.
- So we have to find what Schaeffer calls a circle of what is right -- that which is consistent with God’s good character, and an outside-of-the-circle of what is not-right -- that which is in violation of God’s character.

Homework Lesson 13 Day 2

- The Law in the Bible gives us the way to draw that circle properly, not just as an approximation that our own conscience or cultural group supplies, faulty though it might be, but an accurate circle because God has communicated with us. God's communication of the circle supplies the moral universals.
- What does Schaeffer say the fault of orthodoxy -- rightness of doctrine -- often is?

Homework Lesson 13 Day 3

- Read Galatians chapters 4 - 6. In chapter 4 verses 1-11, legalism is compared to slavery, because we try harder and harder to do all the exactly right details, and we find ourselves never perfect enough. In verses 12 through 20, legalism is described as creating factions that shut each other out. In verses 21-31, the comparison is made to the two sons of Abraham, one born to a slave and one born to his legal wife, with the result of one's being shut out. Chapter five says we are to choose freedom -- and a very special kind of freedom -- the freedom to be led by the Holy Spirit in doing what is right.

Homework Lesson 13 Day 3

- Symptoms of legalism are listed in chapter 5:19-21, because legalism does not set free from sin. Underlying problems will remain if we depend on our own righteousness rather than the deliverance from evil that God provides. Symptoms of the flesh still at work are immorality, impurity, sensuality, idolatry, sorcery, enmities, strife, jealousy, outbursts of anger, disputes, dissensions, factions, envying, drunkenness, carousing, and similar things.

Homework Lesson 13 Day 3

- Demonstration of being led by the Spirit are in the list in chapter 5:22-25. If we are truly led by the Spirit, we will stay within the circle of what is right, and we will have the attitude of the Holy Spirit in the process -- love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control. We won't be at the mercy of our passions, and we won't be boastful, challenging, and envying of one another.
- Of course, we can also become legalistic about demanding perfect attitudes from others all the time! A fake cheerfulness is not the goal to demand from people.

Homework Lesson 13 Day 3

- We have to go back to what was said earlier. Do we have the right to demand perfection of ourselves, or each other, in this life, even in the attitudes described above? NO. But we have the right to demand reality of ourselves. These good attitudes should be ours in some measure, and increasing, if we are understanding properly and living in correct fellowship with God.

Homework Lesson 13 Day 3

- We love truth. If the truth is that we are experiencing grief, we would not be honest to act bubbly with joy. God did not call us to be fake. But even in grief, there will be flashes of joy—because God is worthy of our trust.
- It is a human characteristic that emotions follow actions, such that acting better than we feel can lead to better feelings. That is not what is in view in these verses. The fruits of the Holy Spirit are produced by Him as He transforms our lives. They are beyond natural emotions and are inherently honest..

Homework Lesson 13 Day 3

- Even in grief we need to express the joy that God gives when He gives it. Jesus was not laughing when He hung on the cross, even though He chose that path for the joy that was set before Him -- the joy of making a way for us to go to heaven. He saw the joyful goal, and chose to put up with the agony.
- In Galatians chapter 6:1-5, how are we to confront our friends when they need confrontation?

Homework Lesson 13 Day 3

- What is the law of sowing and reaping in Galatians 6:7-10, and what are its two corollaries? What were the two motives for those wanting legalism to prevail?
- Consider that persecution was severe in New Testament times and remained so until Christianity was legalized in the early 300s AD.
- What does this imply about the availability of God's power to help His people rise above persecution?

Homework Lesson 13 Day 3

- An issue with universal and particular moral facets for Gentile Christians in the New Testament was the question of whether to eat meat that had been offered to idols and then placed in the market for sale.
- The Gentiles had to stop worshipping idols to obey God's universal law, and they had to stop the immoral practices that occurred in some idol worship as well. If they ate meat from that situation, they risked harming their conscience through their thought life.

Homework Lesson 13 Day 3

- Some were strong enough in their faith that the practice was not a problem, while others were weak in faith and could lose their clear conscience through the practice.
- In addition, as they fellowshiped with other people, they ran into the problem of the source of the meat at the party.
- Several passages in the New Testament deal with the issue. It was a particular issue with universal tangents.

Homework Lesson 13 Day 3

- Read Romans 14:1- 23. What were the overriding principles for all these particular issues with universal tangents?
- Read I Corinthians 8:1-13. If a particular issue is no problem for you, does that mean you are free to participate in it? What other factor enters the equation?
- Read Revelation 2:12-29. Was God happy with the churches at Pergamum and Thyatira because of the way they dealt with this issue?

Homework Lesson 13 Day 3

- How were they to handle the issue, according to I Corinthians 10:14-33, when meat was served at a party?
- Do we have a problem with eating this kind of meat today? Do we have similar issues of particulars with universal tangents today?
- Read Appendix A of THE GOD WHO IS THERE, through the paragraph on the fourth page that starts “The middle class family...”
- How does Schaeffer’s description of the proper use of apologetics correspond to walking in grace rather than walking in law, as our Bible study has discussed?