



Daily Verse and Comment

Romans 3:31

(31) Do we then make void the law through faith? Certainly not! On the contrary, we establish the law.

New King James Version

When we understand how our [faith](#) in Christ's sacrifice upholds God's law, we can better understand the rest of Paul's letter. Grasping the meaning of this one line reveals that what seems like the apostle faltering between two opinions is actually a brilliant argument to keep his audience from two errors:

» One is thinking too highly of our works, such that we use them to commend ourselves to [God](#) when they are, in reality, simply our duty. God will *never* be in our debt.

» The second is thinking that, since works cannot justify us, they are of no value at all. This faulty conclusion leads to assuming we can live however we please, and God's grace will cover it all. This [antinomian](#) misreading of grace is the error of those who disregard God's standards as they hum their way to destruction.

Paul's teaching in these chapters harmonizes with his Savior's warning of the coming judgment:

Not everyone who says to Me, “Lord, Lord,” shall enter the [kingdom of heaven](#), but he who does the will of My Father in heaven. *Many* will say to Me in that day, “Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Your name, cast out demons in Your name, and done many wonders in Your name?” And then I will declare to them, “I never knew you; *depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness!*” ([Matthew 7:21-23](#); emphasis ours)

Neither keeping the law nor doing works of charity will justify us. On the other hand, both withholding good from our neighbor and practicing lawlessness—continuing in sin—will separate us from our Savior. The correct reading is that God justifies us freely through belief in His Son's redemptive work to give us a clean slate to begin a spiritual relationship with God and learn how to live by His every word ([Deuteronomy 8:3](#); [Matthew 4:4](#); [Luke 4:4](#)).

— David C. Grabbe

To learn more, see:

[How Does Faith Establish the Law? \(Part Two\)](#)

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