



[Matthew 5:18-20](#)

(18) For verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled. (19) Whosoever therefore shall break one of these least commandments, and shall teach men so, he shall be called the least in the kingdom of heaven: but whosoever shall do and teach them, the same shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven. (20) For I say unto you, That except your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no case enter into the kingdom of heaven.

King James Version

The letter of the law that the Pharisees tried to keep was not enough—especially for us. We have to exceed the letter of the law. Here, [Jesus](#) was so specific about the continuance of the law from the Old Covenant to the New that He referred to the smallest punctuation and pronunciation marks contained in the written law, the "jot and tittle."

Most modern theology discards the letter in favor of the spirit, but one extreme is as bad as the other. The true Christian needs both the written letter of the law as well as its spirit to keep it properly.

To keep [God's law](#) properly, we have to learn to recognize the spirit of the law. The spirit of the law means God's original intent or purpose behind each law.

When [God](#) designed the [Sabbath](#), for example, He intended it to be a blessing to human beings. He designed it to be a refreshing rest and an opportunity both to recuperate physically after six days of work and to draw close to Him in [love](#) and to worship Him, as well as to deepen love for the brethren through [fellowship](#) and outgoing concern.

Jesus knew the spirit of the Sabbath commandment. Therefore, He knew that the split second of divine effort involved in [healing](#) was a valid use of time on the Sabbath ([Matthew 12:10-12](#)). Because of Jesus' insight into the divine purpose behind the

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Sabbath, He freed the crippled worshipper of his burden. He experienced a wonderful and exciting blessing because Jesus understood the spirit of the law. God's law is always a blessing to those who recognize the spirit of the law.

— Martin G. Collins

To learn more, see:

[The Law's Purpose and Intent](#)



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[God's Law](#)

[Intent of Law](#)

[Jot and Tittle](#)

[Keeping Commandments](#)

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[Law, Intent of](#)

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