



"Law is order in liberty, and without order liberty is social chaos."
—John Ireland

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The Beauty of the Law

We live in an ironic age, one in which national leaders hail individual freedom and human rights as the noblest of goals yet enact laws that regulate and police our daily lives. Because we live in such a highly governed condition—consider that we will soon not be able to choose the kind of light bulb to use in a living-room lamp—we could easily grow cynical toward the idea of law altogether, wanting instead to live without the government holding our hands.

Further, we see that passing laws and taxes upon a financially struggling nation is certainly not wise and could potentially end the prosperity of our nation. Nonetheless, law is a necessity, one that [God](#) first implemented and man subsequently perverted. The laws of the Bible are numerous and, in some instances, farther reaching than those of any human government. However, God's laws are fundamentally exceptional to man's laws. The [law of God](#) possesses a universality and harmony that comprise a beautiful system—one both corrective and constructive, when properly kept—that works toward achieving an even more beautiful goal.

To help us understand the essential superiority of God's laws to man's, we may draw upon the ideas of the British economist, F. A. Hayek. An important thinker for the policies of the political Right, Hayek acclaimed the free market as the basis of a healthy and successful economy. The market, Hayek defines, is a complex system and dynamic web of producer-consumer relations, spanning and touching nearly every aspect of an individual's life. Building on the ideas of his predecessor, Adam Smith, Hayek shows that everyone buys and sells to meet his personal needs, which differ among individuals. As a result, the free market becomes a system in constant flux, always

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acquiring new producers and new consumers, always adapting to meet the changing needs of its many participants.

Laws that attempt to regulate the market, according to Hayek, are inherently flawed. For a law to shape action toward a desired goal, that law must function in complete harmony with the mechanics of the regulated system. As an example, consider an automobile engine, a machine composed of various parts that all work together to achieve a single goal: moving the car forward. For the engine to work, all its pieces must work harmoniously. When designing the engine, the engineer must know the length of the cylinder in order to make the connecting rod long enough for the crankshaft to push the piston up and down, thus creating combustion and the potential for movement. In the engine, each piece's measurements and specifications must match the others to produce the desired outcome. If even one measurement is off, the engine will not work properly, and the goal will not be achieved.

Thinking of each measurement as a law—the length of piston analogous to the barring of a certain action—the engine becomes a perfect analogy for understanding the perfection of God's laws for us: If we choose to ignore even one of God's laws, our spiritual health will be compromised. So it is with man's laws governing social activity: Market regulation is suspect because it is humanly impossible to account for all the market's various parts, multiple thousands of producers and millions of consumers engaged in innumerable transactions. Indeed, the wrong law, like an ill-fitting piston, could cause the whole system to sputter and eventually fail.

The market is only one aspect of human society, yet it alone is beyond total human comprehension. Beyond the market are such fundamental institutions as marriage, [childrearing](#), friendships, education, and so on. When we consider how complex our lives are, we should marvel at the glory of God's laws, perfectly guiding us through each of these distinct experiences ([Psalm 19:7](#); [119:96](#)). As the Engineer of the human mind, God has taken into account all of the factors and possible outcomes regarding each individual's personal choices, including how each person's social, cultural, and physical environment may influence his decisions. He knows the consequence of each action—emotional, psychological, and spiritual—and despite all of the potential variations between the lives of distinct individuals, God can shape our minds and characters into His image through a unified body of eternal laws.

He can achieve this because His laws are fundamentally different from man's laws. Whereas humans impose laws onto a system, from a simple board game to a nation, God's laws are a part of the essential nature of any system He creates. Indeed, the two cannot be separated. In Psalm 19, [David](#) prefaces his praise of God's law with a

description of His creation, linking them and demonstrating that they are one. For example, just as an apple will always fall to the ground due to gravity, committing a [sin](#) will always have a negative consequence, and obeying a law will always improve one's life, though not always immediately. God's laws, unlike man's, have not been arbitrarily placed upon creation but are an inherent part of it.

His laws, then, are not burdensome, but instead the exact opposite, a comfort and guide ([I John 5:3](#)). Just as we can be certain of our sins carrying with them unavoidable repercussions, we can trust that following God's laws will transform us into the [image of God](#) (unless we perform them only as empty ritual). Conversely, to deny God's laws, to see them as somehow unnecessary or superfluous to [grace](#), is to deny reality. One might as well return to believing the Earth is not only flat, but also the center of the universe.

As David so often exclaims with sincere [joy](#) in the Psalms, God's law is a blessing. It is instruction, describing to us the way [the world](#) works ([Psalm 119:97-104](#); [Romans 7:7](#)); it is guidance, always available to point us in the right direction ([Exodus 13:9](#); [Psalm 119:105](#)); it is creative, forming in us the righteous character of God ([I John 3:24](#); [Hebrews 8:10](#)). Yet, despite the dynamic power of God's law and its perfect and harmonious integration with and through creation, it is beautifully simple, utterly unlike the mind-boggling body of current, human laws. Instead, Paul states in [Galatians 5:14](#) that all of God's laws can be summarized and expressed in the single command, "You shall [love](#) your neighbor as yourself."

- Staff

From the Archives: Featured Sermon

[Sanctification and Holiness \(Part 1\)](#)

by John W. Ritenbaugh

John Ritenbaugh emphasizes that we are manufactured goods designed specifically to glorify God. We have been summoned or separated from the rest of the world for the specific purpose of having God reproduced in ourselves —becoming clean and pure, transformed into God's image. As God's royal priesthood, we have a responsibility to draw near to God, keeping His commandments, witnessing to the world that God is God. Chipping away at the living stones, fitting them into their proper places, God works continually shaping and fashioning His new creation ([II Corinthians 5:17](#)).

From the Archives: Featured Article

[Dead to the Law?](#)

by Earl L. Henn (1934-1997)

Romans 7, verse 4, says that we are 'dead to the law through the body of Christ.' What does this mean? Earl Henn explains the meaning in its context, showing that it refers to the 'old man' which perished at our baptism.

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