

Paul told the Corinthian church that “‘knowledge’ puffs up but love builds up” (1Cor 8:1). So, if you love knowledge and look into the word of God to gain mere knowledge and you absolutely love doing it to the exclusion or ignoring of everything else, you may be “puffed up” and indeed not “building up.”.... Puffiness rips and tears. Puffiness pushes people away. Puffiness divides. Perhaps even more critical is the fact that puffiness portrays a small gospel and devastatingly distorts God’s glory.

To the puffy I say, “Stop studying your Bible.” Go on a quest for Jesus. He is the Word! Study Him, not it.

Studying Jesus and not any knowledge regarding Jesus is the most popular rendering of 1Corinthians 2:2 in our day: we are supposed to make every effort to know NOTHING but Christ and him crucified. After all, according to another popular truism in our day, “He is a person—not a precept.”

Of course, most Protestants would deny all of this out of hand when confronted, but the roots and foundation of Protestant ideology has at least resulted in a lax view of knowledge while leaving the thinking to Protestant academia. Some well-known evangelicals such as Dr. Jay Adams have stated the obvious: Protestants are biblically illiterate, and have no wisdom in regard to Christian living other than God-given commonsense and even that is at an all-time low.

Christians, who strive for wisdom and spiritual maturity in the institutional church, if they don’t give up, will eventually find themselves in turmoil and at a crossroads. Striding towards commonsense spiritual objectives will continually put them at odds with the Protestant herd. I was certainly no exception. As someone who was always considered knowledgeable wherever I attended church as a Baptist, in reality, I knew nothing. The knowledge that I had accumulated in various seminaries and Bible colleges was all but worthless. Though I read and studied my Bible more than most, I understood little of it. Most of what I read made no sense at all. Nevertheless, I deemed myself knowledgeable relative to the environment, yet in my heart, I knew the Christian life made no sense and I was for the most part confused. In reality, I was good at constructing Protestant sentences with orthodox bumper stickers and pithy truisms.

So, I set out on a journey eight years ago to search for clarity after 23 years of confusion and strife. The part of my journey that really made everything come together began in 2011 when I embarked on a personal study of Paul’s letter to the Romans. I was determined to make this the time—the endeavor that would reveal once and for all what I was searching for: why my God seemed to be a God of confusion. I prayed earnestly at the beginning of the study that I would just let Paul’s words say what they plainly said. If something he wrote was definitive, I would use that as a building block of understanding.

Though I stayed true to the plan, not much happened until Romans 4:15. That’s the day my life came to a full stop.

For the law brings wrath, but where there is no law there is no transgression.

What in the world did Paul mean by that? NO law, NO sin: especially in the context; speaking of Christians. I kept it mind and continued to work through the letter. Then I came to Romans 5:13...

for sin indeed was in the world before the law was given, but sin is not counted where there is no law.

There it was again: no law, no sin. I stopped there in my verse by verse study and read through the rest of the letter and found the following:

Romans 7:6 - But now we are released from the law, having died to that which held us captive, so that we serve in the new way of the Spirit and not in the old way of the written code. 7 What then shall we say? That the law is sin? By no means! Yet if it had not been for the law, I would not have known sin. For I would not have known what it is to covet if the law had not said, "You shall not covet." 8 But sin, seizing an opportunity through the commandment, produced in me all kinds of covetousness. For apart from the law, sin lies dead.

Apart from the law sin lies dead. There it is again. No law, no sin. Then I read the following as well:

Romans 10:4 - For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to everyone who believes.

Conclusion: Christ died on the cross to end the law, and where there is no law, there is no sin. That's how Christ took my sins away: He died on the cross to end the law. The true Christian is free from any judgement or condemnation—we are not under the jurisdiction of the law.

I wasn't the least bit sure where this left the law in regard to the Christian life, but pondering the simple fact that we are no longer condemned was exhilarating and freeing. The old self that was under the law of sin and death died with Christ; you can't indict a dead person, they are no longer under the law. And even if you exhumed my body and presented it in court, the judge has no law in which to convict me (Rom 7:1-6). There is NOW no condemnation for those in Christ (Rom 8:1).

Again, I was not sure where this left the law in regard to the believer's life, but I had my building block; part of the pieces fit together which would lead to more pieces fitting and an increased understanding of the bigger picture.

Then I came to Romans 8:2.

For the law of the Spirit of life has set you free in Christ Jesus from the law of sin and death.

Remember, I had committed to simply letting the words say what they say. As a result, I saw something in this verse that I had never seen before; clearly, Paul wrote of two separate laws...*the law of the Spirit*, which I had always thought of as the Spirit's realm of influence, and *the law of sin and death*.

"Wait a minute here," I thought to myself. "If the law of sin and death refers to the written law that condemns mankind, and the two laws spoken of here are the same Greek word, and they are, why would one refer to a realm while the other one referred to a written law? Could it be that this is two perspectives on the same law?" I knew that a literal take on this verse would demand that, and then John 17:17 came to mind:

Sanctify them in the truth; your word is truth.

Then another verse came to mind:

And when he comes, he will convict the world concerning sin and righteousness and judgment (Jn 16:8).

That's when I realized that the law has two different applications/perspectives: one for the lost and one for the saved. But verses were not done coming to mind:

Love does no wrong to others, so love fulfills the requirements of God's law (Rom 13:10).

For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision nor uncircumcision counts for anything, but only faith working through love (Gal 5:6).

So, the Christian is free to aggressively love God and others through obedience without ANY fear of condemnation:

There is no fear in love, but perfect [mature] love casts out fear. For fear has to do with punishment, and whoever fears has not been perfected [matured, or growing] in love (1Jn 4:18).

Therefore, why the Reformation is a lie is not complicated at all. This SIMPLE fact makes Protestant theology a house of cards: it keeps so-called believers under *the law of sin and death*; its very definition of a Christian is the Bible's definition of a lost person...under law (Rom 6:14). Protestantism is predicated on a single perspective on the law that Christians remain under; they remain under condemnation. This condemnation is **covered** by Christ's righteousness as the "Christian" lives by faith alone. Living by **faith alone works** (usually some kind of ritual like "preaching the gospel to ourselves everyday") imputes the obedience of Christ to our Christian lives as a way to keep ourselves justified. The Reformed call this "double imputation."

Once one gets past all of the theological Protestant-speak, it boils down to extremely simple theological math: a Christian is NOT free to love—Jesus must love for us lest it be works salvation. And it almost goes without saying that there is a love famine in the institutional church for this very reason. The Protestant is not free to love, but must focus on a convoluted life formula that supposedly imputes the righteousness of Christ to our lives and thereby keeps us saved. Yes, this is the dirty little secret: *total depravity* doesn't merely apply to the unregenerate, but also to the "saints."

Yes, yes, many a Protestant doth protest against this accusation because few Protestants know what Protestantism is. Nevertheless, it is a false gospel that denies the new birth and keeps people under law and not under grace—a grace that frees the individual to aggressively love without fear of condemnation and the mire of unhealthy introspection.

We are saved APART from the law of sin and death...period (Rom 3:21), and it does NOT matter who keeps the law, the law of sin and death itself is the issue. Salvation is accomplished by the ENDING of the law of sin and death—not the fulfilling of it. Christ came to fulfill the law of the Spirit of life (and love) through us (Rom 8:4)...NOT the law of sin and death.

That would make the law of sin and death a co-life-giver with Christ. The law cannot give life unto salvation. If Christ fulfilled the law of sin and death with loving obedience to the Father, that law is a co-life-giver. That is Paul's entire point in Galatians chapter 3. There is only ONE seed. If we are still under the law, the law is an additional seed that can give life...but there is only ONE!

Hence, Protestantism goes the way of most other false religions; some ritual or tradition fulfills the law of sin and death and separates the individual from the freedom to love without condemnation and according to the law of the Spirit of life. Love is replaced by obeying men and faithfulness to their institutions. The law of love is replaced with the traditions of men and their orthodoxy.

Consequently, we are in a Protestant dark age. In the same way that secular America has awakened to the failure of the elitist political class, Christians must awaken to realize the failure of Protestant academia. The assembly of Christ was a laity movement, and only the laity can return God's people to the truth of the gospel. This is a repeat of history when God's elect were continually troubled by the 1<sup>st</sup> century Gnostic elitists. Paul wrote to them...

For consider your calling, brothers: not many of you were wise according to worldly standards, not many were powerful, not many were of noble birth.

Likewise, the beloved James addressed the problem as well:

Listen, my beloved brothers, has not God chosen those who are poor in the world to be rich in faith and heirs of the kingdom, which he has promised to those who love him? But you have dishonored the poor man. Are not the rich the ones who

oppress you, and the ones who drag you into court? Are they not the ones who blaspheme the honorable name by which you were called?

This is our mission at TANK, to aid the priesthood of believers in rediscovering the truth of the gospel and kingdom living robbed from us by 500 years of Protestant orthodoxy. The light has been covered by the Protestant basket long enough, and this is a matter of simple theological math: the *new birth* is the standard of righteousness, NOT the law of sin and death, and it matters not who keeps it—it CANNOT give life.

So, the speakers at this year's conference are partaking in this journey in the arena of ideas. This is an issue that addresses every area of life and culture. Other than the gospel of first importance stated here, everything is being examined and revisited. It's not group think, it's collective truth made up of individuals seeking the one mind of Christ, not the traditions of men.

Let all be convinced according to their own conscience. Protestant elitists will not stand in our stead regardless of their claims, but each person will give an account for the sum and substance of their own lives. Let us do it with trembling and fear; not any fear of condemnation, but a fear of trading the life of Christ for the death of tyranny.

Because only truth sanctifies,

Paul M. Dohse