

“Strictly Enforced”

by Bryan Gibson

When a law or rule is strictly enforced, like a speed limit or a dress code, it means at least two things—unless it’s posted merely for effect. 1) The authorities will be watching closely; 2) They will punish us if they see us doing something wrong. But here’s the thing about man-made rules and laws—they’re not all strictly enforced. We’ve got to obey them (1 Peter 2:13; Romans 13:1-7; Titus 3:1), regardless, but the fact is, when it comes to man’s laws, some are more strictly enforced than others.

That’s not the case with God’s law—not at all. Every single commandment is strictly enforced, so we dare not take any of them lightly. Jesus said, “Whoever therefore breaks one of the least of these commandments, and teaches men so, shall be called least in the kingdom of heaven...” (Matthew 5:19). We can’t obey some commandments, even the “weightier” ones, and leave “the others undone” (Matthew 23:23). Speaking of Jesus, Peter said, “Him you shall hear in **all things**, whatever He says to you” (Acts 3:22). To all His apostles, Jesus said, “Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to **observe all things** that I have commanded you...” (Matthew 28:19-20). Epaphras prayed that his brethren would “stand perfect and complete in **all the will of God**” (Colossians 4:12).

Remember, “strictly enforced” means two things, so let’s apply them to God’s law. First, does God watch us closely? You better believe it. “And there is no creature hidden from His sight, but all things are naked and open to the eyes of Him to whom we must give account” (Hebrews 4:13). All things are naked—even our minds and hearts. Jesus said, “I am He who searches the minds and hearts. And I will give to each one of you according to your works” (Revelation 2:23). No transgression, no act of disobedience, ever escapes His attention.

And then the second one—does God punish disobedience? To the Scriptures we go. “But to those who are self-seeking and do not obey the truth...indignation and wrath, tribulation and anguish...” (Romans 2:8-9). “In flaming fire taking vengeance on those who do not know God, and on those who do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ” (2 Thessalonians 1:8). “For if the word spoken through angels proved steadfast, and every transgression and disobedience received a just reward, how shall we escape if we neglect so great a salvation?” (Hebrews 2:2-4).

So our salvation is entirely dependent on our obedience—is that what we’re saying? Not at all. None of us will be perfectly obedient to the law of Christ, the law that we’re all under today (1 Corinthians 9:21). We will have to seek forgiveness time and time again (1 John 1:8-2:2). But that doesn’t mean that we can be casual about obedience. Every commandment of Christ is important, and every commandment is strictly enforced. Treat them as such, and we’ll never have any problem repenting of sin and seeking forgiveness, and we’ll receive the reward He has promised to “those who diligently seek Him” (Hebrews 11:6).