

A response to what was written in Ch 10 of "Grasping God's Word" on page 203

What does God want of us?

To do justly, to love mercy and walk humbly with Him – to listen and learn from Him, and not be proud.

Jesus said that "the weighty matters of the law" are justice, mercy, and faith (and the love of God).

He said that nothing going into us can defile us, but what comes out of our mouths – because that comes from our hearts – "out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks"

With regards to eating – or whatever we do – it has to be done in good faith – because "whatever is not of faith is sin". "He that understands to do good and doesn't do it, to him it is sin." (Rom 14:23, James 4:17)

These are overriding principles. If we focus on these, does it mean that we ignore "lesser" instructions and laws given by God?

*Jesus said – Matt 5 ¹⁷ "Do not think that I came to destroy the Law or the Prophets. I did not come to destroy but to fulfill. ¹⁸ For assuredly, I say to you, till heaven and earth pass away, one ^ἄjot or one ^ἄtittle will by no means pass from the law till all is fulfilled. ¹⁹ **Whoever therefore breaks one of the least of these commandments, and teaches men so, shall be called least in the kingdom of heaven; but whoever does and teaches *them*, he shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven.** ²⁰ For I say to you, that unless your righteousness exceeds *the* righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, you will by no means enter the kingdom of heaven.*

In the Law, God said through Moses "do not add to or take away from these words"

Deut 4 "Now, O Israel, listen to the statutes and the judgments which I teach you to observe, that you may live, and go in and take possession of the land which the LORD God of your fathers is giving you. ² **You shall not add to the word** which I command you, **nor take from it**, that you may keep the commandments of the LORD your God which I command you. ³ Your eyes have seen what the LORD did at Baal Peor; for the LORD your God has destroyed from among you all the men who followed Baal of Peor. ⁴ But you who held fast to the LORD your God *are* alive today, every one of you.

⁵ "Surely I have taught you statutes and judgments, just as the LORD my God commanded me, **that you should act according to *them* in the land** which you go to possess. ⁶ Therefore be careful to observe *them*; for this is your wisdom and your

understanding in the sight of the peoples who will hear all these statutes, and say, 'Surely this great nation is a wise and understanding people.'

⁷ "For what great nation *is there* that has God so near to it, as the LORD our God *is to us, for whatever reason we may call upon Him?* ⁸ And what great nation is there that has **such statutes and righteous judgments as are in all this law** which I set before you this day? ⁹ Only take heed to yourself, and diligently keep yourself, lest you forget the things your eyes have seen, and lest they depart from your heart all the days of your life. And teach them to your children and your grandchildren, ¹⁰ *especially concerning* the day you stood before the LORD your God in Horeb, when the LORD said to me, 'Gather the people to Me, and I will let them **hear My words, that they may learn to fear Me** all the days they live on the earth, and *that* they may teach their children.'

*In verse 5 above it says "that you should act according to them **in the land**" – many of the instructions were specific to how they were to live in the Land. Living "as strangers" in other Lands, one cannot apply all these righteous statutes and judgments. As Paul wrote to Titus in ch 2 ¹¹ For the grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men, ¹² **teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in the present age,** ¹³ looking for the blessed hope and glorious appearing of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ, ¹⁴ who gave Himself for us, that He might **redeem us from every lawless deed** and purify for Himself His own special people, zealous for good works.*

*Solomon was inspired to write in **Eccl 7***

¹⁶ Do not be overly righteous,
Nor be overly wise:
Why should you destroy yourself?

¹⁷ Do not be overly wicked,
Nor be foolish:
Why should you die before your time?

¹⁸ *It is good that you grasp this,*
And also not remove your hand from the other;
For he who fears God will \square escape them all.

Concerning the eating of meat -

Deut 12 ²⁰ "When the LORD your God enlarges your border as He has promised you, and you say, 'Let me eat meat,' because you long to eat meat, you may eat as much meat as your heart desires. ²¹ If the place where the LORD your God chooses to put His name is too far from you, then you may slaughter from your herd and from your flock which the LORD has given you, just as I have commanded you, and you may eat

within your gates as much as your heart desires. ²² Just as the gazelle and the deer are eaten, so you may eat them; the unclean and the clean alike may eat them. ²³ Only be sure that **you do not eat the blood**, for the blood is the life; you may not eat the life with the meat. ²⁴ You shall not eat it; you shall pour it on the earth like water. ²⁵ **You shall not eat it**, that it may go well with you and your children after you, when you **do *what is right in the sight of the LORD***. ²⁶ Only the holy things which you have, and your vowed offerings, you shall take and go to the place which the LORD chooses. ²⁷ And you shall offer your burnt offerings, the meat and the blood, on the altar of the LORD your God; and the blood of your sacrifices shall be poured out on the altar of the LORD your God, and you shall eat the meat. ²⁸ Observe and obey all these words which I command you, that it may go well with you and your children after you forever, when you do *what is good and right in the sight of the LORD your God*.

²⁹ **“When** the LORD your God cuts off from before you the nations which you go to dispossess, and you displace them **and dwell in their land**, ³⁰ take heed to yourself that you are not ensnared to follow them, after they are destroyed from before you, and that you do not inquire after their gods, saying, ‘How did these nations serve their gods? I also will do likewise.’ ³¹ **You shall not worship the LORD your God in that way;** for every [Ⓜ]abomination to the LORD which He hates they have done to their gods; for they burn even their sons and daughters in the fire to their gods.

³² **“Whatever I command you, be careful to observe it; you shall not add to it nor take away from it.**

The problem was adding to God’s law and taking away from it. Jesus had this to say -
Mark 7 ⁶ He answered and said to them, “Well did Isaiah prophesy of you hypocrites, as it is written:

‘This people honors Me with *their* lips,
But their heart is far from Me.
⁷ And in vain they worship Me,
Teaching *as* doctrines the commandments of men.’

⁸ For laying aside the commandment of God, you hold the tradition of men—[Ⓜ]the washing of pitchers and cups, and many other such things you do.”

Was what Jesus says here going against Deut 12:23-24? This was a command of God, not an addition – but it does not contradict the overriding principle of what He is teaching. It is disobedience – going against faith – that defiles. Adam and Eve ate the fruit they were told not to eat – even though it appeared good to eat, and did not poison them. The disobedience defiled them. To knowingly eat blood – or something

classified as unclean by God in the law is to be defiled by disobedience – regardless of any nutritional consequence.

*As going against faith soils a conscience – so a contaminated conscience can **only** be cleansed by faith – faith in the curse sacrifice of Jesus.*

¹⁴ When He had called all the multitude to *Himself*, He said to them, "Hear Me, everyone, and understand: ¹⁵ There is nothing that enters a man from outside which can defile him; but the things which come out of him, those are the things that defile a man (*because words come from the heart*).¹⁶ If anyone has ears to hear, let him hear!" *He was quoting from here -*

Isaiah 29 ¹³ Therefore the Lord said:

*"Inasmuch as these people draw near with their mouths
And honor Me with their lips,*

*But **have removed their hearts far from Me,**
And their fear toward Me is taught by the commandment of men,*

¹⁴ Therefore, behold, I will again do a marvelous work
Among this people,

A marvelous work and a wonder;

For the wisdom of their wise *men* shall perish,

And the understanding of their prudent *men* shall be hidden."

¹⁵ Woe to those **who seek deep to hide their counsel far from the LORD,**
And their works are in the dark;

They say, "Who sees us?" and, "Who knows us?"

¹⁶ Surely you have things turned around!

Shall the potter be esteemed as the clay;

For shall the thing made say of him who made it,

"He did not make me"?

Or shall the thing formed say of him who formed it,

"He has no understanding"?

Jesus said of the Scribes and Pharisees of His day – Matt 23 ²⁴ Blind guides, who strain out a gnat and swallow a camel!

*Both the camel and the gnat are unclean to eat – but it was a colourful way of describing their behaviour and priorities. Focusing on the minutia and ignoring the much greater things. It is a matter of prioritising - ²⁶ Blind Pharisee, **first cleanse the inside** of the cup and dish, that the outside of them may be clean also.*

Jesus never said anything about ending the clean and unclean meat distinctions – in fact if one reads carefully, He fully endorsed them (Luke 11:11-13, Matt 13:47-48, Luke 8:32-33).