

Hebrews 8:10 *"For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, declares the Lord: I will put my laws into their minds, and write them on their hearts, and I will be their God, and they shall be my people."*

The Old Testament laws were designed to teach Israel, and all mankind, to be morally good, accountable, fair and just; respectful of the rights and property of others. If they were not, there would be immediate and severe repercussions and consequences. The leaders of families, clans, tribes and even the king himself were charged by God to carry out the necessary discipline. Jesus came that we might become more, not merely morally good but spiritually godly. The motive for righteousness does not stem simply from fear of punishment, for the Christian, but rather from reverent regard and appreciation for the love of Christ which he ultimately demonstrated by his death on the cross of Calvary. Looking presentable and acceptable on the outside is not necessarily a reflection of how we are on the inside where prying eyes cannot penetrate. The condition of the heart of man, the seat of his soul, his spirit, his will, determines his character. Whereas, man's desire to impress others or to impress himself, often is the motivation that prompts his behavior.

The Lord, Jesus Christ fulfilled the prophecy of the Old Testament prophets to instill his law or write his law upon the hearts of the obedient. Once the "law of liberty", the "law of love" has been embedded within the hearts of believers, selfishness with all her children: greed, indulgence and pride dies and is replaced by a love that becomes our motivation to work for the best good of all. There is no allowance for contradiction and inconsistency within the hearts of the Disciples of Christ who are ever learning and adjusting their thinking to conform to the molding and shaping of the power of the Word. We will not settle for just an attractive godly looking exterior. True beauty before the Lord lies within.

Our goal as Christians is not to act better than our peers, but rather our goal is to be like Jesus before our peers. We are not trying to embarrass others by open displays of religious expression. We want them to see a commitment from us to practice in reality what we profess to believe in theory. That is, our motives as well as our actions must work in synchrony: harmonizing the sound of our lips and the dexterity of our hands with the melody in our hearts. It is then that this, our "sweet song of life" transcends the cacophony of shrill empty voices and piercing annoying distractions that continuously bombard us. We can confidently live up to such an elusive goal only by the power of the word lodged within our hearts. Only the words from the mouth of the Lord himself can transform the stony rebellious hearts of men into receptive, submissive instruments of righteousness. As God's instruments the "music" we make reflects not only the dedication of the artist but even more importantly the power of the composition. May we always yield to the hand of the Master?