

The Reason For Regulations

Years ago, when I was in college, I had an assignment to write a formal paper on some aspect of how government regulations affected society. The paper could be on just about anything, so since I was interested in the automobile industry, I decided to write about how safety regulations had affected the industry and their cost to the consumer. During the research for the information that would be the basis for the paper, I found that just about all government regulations could be classified as *safety* related, and that the regulations were fairly extensive. Government regulations dictated the brightness of the headlights, taillights, and signal lights; they dictated the manufacturing process for all glass in the passenger compartment; they dictated the type of fuel used and the emissions controls once the fuel was burned; and there are so many other regulations for each and every automobile manufactured and/or sold in the United States that it would make your head spin. One might look at all the regulations and begin to wonder if it was even *possible* for anyone to build and sell an automobile at all! Many men have begun with good intentions but found that the regulations were simply too daunting and they gave up before the first automobile got off the drawing board.

But, as you probably have guessed, quite a few people have figured out what is required of them and they have built automobiles and have sold them in the United States — some for over 100 years now! And as restrictive as those regulations are, have you noticed that all of the automobiles do not all look the same? [I know...some of you might disagree with that last statement.] Even though all manufacturers must abide by the same regulations, I believe they have done an exemplary job of making their product distinctive from that of the competition. Park a Ferrari F430 next to a Ford F350 and you can easily see how the manufacturers have been able to make and keep each vehicle's individual distinctive features, and how they have made various vehicles that serve various purposes. You want to haul horses — buy the Super Duty pickup truck; you want horses under the hood — buy the sports car. Each serves its intended purpose and all of these vehicles help carry out the public's desire of getting from point A to point B, hauling furniture, or just making a Sunday afternoon drive more pleasant.

I know some people would like to throw out all the regulations and just let the manufacturers build whatever they want, but that would be a disastrous decision. The existing government regulations are in place to ensure our automobiles are safe for the driving public. I have seen video of crash tests from some Chinese auto manufacturers [who are considering entering the U.S. market] and — trust me — you wouldn't want to be driving one of those cars should you be met head-on by another vehicle! And therein is the reason for regulations: They are for the public's interest and safety. Without these regulations, unscrupulous manufacturers would be selling slipshod products that would contribute to an increase in injuries and would cost more lives on the streets and highways. Like them or not, the regulations are for our own good.

Have you ever stopped and considered the reasons for God's regulations — why His laws are as they are? Unfortunately, many people look at His laws like many potential manufacturers do the automobile regulations and mark them off as burdensome and impossible to follow. Many people see the Bible as nothing but a book of restrictive and onerous regulations that are meant to make our lives miserable, while others see it as a set of rules intent on forcing all men to wear black, three-piece suits with white starched shirts and black ties, and women wearing country blue, plain, ankle-length dresses. To many, they see God molding us all into a bunch of mind-numbed robots who have no personality and no individuality whatsoever and they rebel and resist any attempts by

believers to get them to see otherwise. To many in the world, the worst possible thing they could do is let the Bible tell them how they should live!

Under the Old Law [whose laws were definitely more extensive than the New], Moses told God's people, "*And the LORD commanded us to do all these statutes, to fear the LORD our God, for our good always, that He might preserve us alive, as we are this day*" (**Deut. 6:24**); he would reiterate this to them in **10:13**. Did you notice that these statutes [laws] were **for their good**? While some would later say that service to God was a weariness (**Mal. 1:13**), the problem was not the Law, but the hearts of the people who said this! When Joshua was about to lead the people into the Promised Land, God reminded him that if he was "*careful to do according to all that is written*" in the Book of Law, "*then you will make your way prosperous, and then you will have good success*" (**Josh. 1:8**). Success and good came to those who kept the commandments, while punishment and eventual captivity came to those who did not. Clearly, the Law was for their good, even if they didn't recognize it at the time.

Under the New Law — what might be called the regulations of Jesus [the New Testament] — it is about an even greater good: our eternal salvation! **Yes, Jesus has given us a law by which we must live if we expect the reward.** Many religious leaders today would have us believe we are "under grace, not law," but this is said only by those who seek to avoid keeping certain portions of the words of Jesus. The problem is that many of these religious leaders do not see this is God's instruction for our good. They willfully forget that God has said, "*All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, that the man of God may be competent, equipped for every good work*" (**2 Tim. 3:16-17**). If it is **profitable**, then it is **good** for us, but we must read it, study it, properly interpret it, and properly apply it — **all** of it — for it to do us any good.

Is it restrictive? Yes, just as any law is inherently restrictive. Every law is a restriction, in a sense, but it is a restriction for our good. Speed limits **restrict** how fast we can go, but what would happen in this country if everyone — regardless of their driving abilities or experience — was allowed to drive as fast as they wanted? Like it or not, the speed limit is for our good. Likewise, the commands of Jesus must be followed, but we should view them as something for our good, rather than merely a set of restrictions. Let us see them as "*the words of eternal life*" (**John 6:68**), "*a message by which you will be saved*" (**Acts 11:14**), and "*the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes*" (**Rom. 1:16**), for that is what they are. But let us also not ignore the fact that these words will judge us in the last day (**John 12:48**). For our spiritual good, it would be best to adhere to those words while we live.

Even with all the regulations that govern the automobile industry, we have seen such exciting products as the Corvette ZO6, the Mustang, the 'Cuda, the Cobra 427, and the beautiful Mercedes 300SL "Gullwing." But we have also benefited from the production of the Ford F150, Chevy Silverado, and Dodge Ram pickups. These widely-varied products came about because someone said, "What can we do within the limits of the given set of regulations?" Instead of seeing the regulations as mere restrictions, they moved forward and built the cars and trucks that now travel our streets and highways. I don't see anyone in the general public complaining about how those regulations made their life **worse**. David wanted to build a temple for God (**2 Sam. 7:1-3**), but God forbid him from doing so (**2 Chron. 22:8**). Did David complain? No! David, because he understood God's restrictions upon him, did everything **but** build the temple! David worked within his limitations, but who of us would say David was **restricted**?

So, how do *you* view the Bible? Believe it or not, those words are for your spiritual good — *if* you obey! — **Steven Harper**