

Love and Law



Collegiate Quarterly

Teacher's Guide

Surveying the Source

Romans 12, 13.

Plotting the Course

The students will:

- ▶ Appreciate that the laws of God are ultimately expressions of His love—even tough love.
- ▶ Understand how they can choose to

hate the sin they love.

- ▶ Realize that submission is essential, but it doesn't always have to be done publicly to experience God's love.

Preparing to Lead

Read to the class at the beginning:

“The substitute teacher (sub) entered a class of 16-year-olds who were known to be quite disruptive. Sam sat in the back facing his friend, Reuben.

“What's your name? Where are you from? We don't do any work in this class, Sir!” Sam said to the sub. The sub managed to get the class to do some work, on the understanding that they could ask him personal questions at the end. Reuben became disruptive and, in accordance

with the rules, backup was called for immediately.

“Reuben, you're not working as promised,” the sub stated.

“Look! I've done half a page in this one lesson alone!”

“Do you have a question you'd like to ask me at the end, Reuben?”

Reuben hastily scribbled a few more lines, and was reasonably quiet, as was the rest of the class.

Materials

Bibles, pencils, sheets of paper, three newspaper clippings of bad news

Getting Started

A. Divide the class into two groups. Ask them to select someone to take notes. The instructions for each group are:

- “Think of four situations or activities that make you happy.”
- “Say why each one makes you happy.”
- “Are there rules/laws governing those situations or activities?”
- “How do those rules/laws contribute to your happiness?”
- “Do you think about the rules/laws when you are enjoying yourself?”
- “Do you think the rules/laws are bad? Why or why not?”

Bring the class together and ask the notetakers to report back.

Ask: •“Why do some people think the

rules/laws are good while others think they are bad?” •“Who or what makes a rule/law good or bad?”

Remind the class of Reuben's role, then ask: •“What did Reuben do so he could ask the sub a personal question?” •“What was the sub's approach?”

B. Divide the class into three groups. Ask them to select a notetaker. Give each group a newspaper story that fits the theme of this week's lesson and a sheet of paper and a pencil. The instructions for each group are for two or three individuals to share the reading of the story, then have the entire group: ▶ Identify the

the good person/s and the bad person/s in the story. Also have each group answer the following questions: •“What rules were broken or upheld?” •“Explain if the rules were good or bad.”

Bring the class together to discuss the

nature of Reuben’s submission. Ask if submission should always be public, particularly when dealing with God. (Obtain different students’ opinions and suggest that we can submit to God in secret.)

Delving Into the Word

A. Use the reproducible activity on page 42. After the groups have finished, have the entire class explore these questions: •“Why do we have laws?” •“How can we learn to love a law that is fair but that also seems oppressive?” •“How easy is it to feel at ease with a law that you like as opposed to one that you don’t like?” •“If you don’t steal, lie, commit adultery, et cetera, are those commandments always upper most in your mind? Explain.” •“Why does the application of rules *in love* make one happier?” •“Do people who try to rigidly keep the commandments focus on love or on difficulties with their lifestyle as they confront the restrictions of rules? Explain.”

Close by saying: “God’s laws are expressions of His love for us, even of His tough love.”

B. On slips of paper, write the following texts: Exodus 20:8–11; Romans 12:9, 10; Romans 12:16; Romans 12:17–19; Romans 13:8–10. Then number the papers 1 through 5. Selecting a number at random, ask the person with that number to read the text aloud from a Bible. After each text is read, discuss the following questions: •“What is the main rule(s) the text is referring to?” •“Are there benefits for (a) keeping that rule? (b) for not keeping that rule?” •“Which benefits in (a) and (b) are longer lasting and lead to more personal and communal happiness?” •“How can a person who loves to do wrong change?”

Conclude with the thought that God’s laws are expressions of His love, and sometimes His tough love, for us.

Discussing the Ideas

1. Based on Romans 13:9, 10, what is the connection between law and love?
2. How does Romans 13:9 help us to understand that self-love is not wrong?
3. The law of love surpasses religious rules and civil laws. What does the law of love require of us that religious rules and civil laws do not? Read James 2:8, 9; 4:11; and 1 Peter 2:16, 17.
4. In Romans 13:13, Paul lists

dissension and jealousy with the orgies, drunkenness, sexual immorality, and debauchery. Why do you think he does this?

5. If the law of love surpasses civil laws, does this mean we do not have to obey civil laws? Explain your answer.
6. When might obeying the law of love mean that we will have to disobey civil laws?

Closing the Activity

Remind the class that the reason Jesus died is because He knew people would sin. But because of His unconditional love for us, He died so that we can choose to have victory over sin.

Read to the class in a quiet but deliberate voice, the four verses of hymn number 317 in *The Seventh-day Adventist Hymnal*. Read the chorus only after the fourth verse. Finish with prayer.

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Directions: Divide the class into small groups. Have them write in the right column the correct Bible text that matches the appropriate text paraphrase in the middle column.

Bible Text	Text Paraphrase	Match the Correct Text to the Paraphrase
Lev. 26:43	God's law shows us how to live.	
Exod. 20:8–11	Abusing God's law for one's own purpose	
Deut. 7:12	Do the right thing.	
Ps. 19:7	Punishment for disobeying God's law	
Ps. 119:18	Follow God's law, and He will keep His covenant of love.	
Ps. 119:165	God's law is good when used properly.	
Matt. 5:17	God's law teaches us how to worship Him.	
Matt. 23:15	Let me see how wonderful God's law is.	
Luke 22:2	Keeping the law overcomes evil.	
Rom. 12:9	God's law is perfect. It refreshes us.	
Rom. 12:17–19	People who follow God's law have peace.	
Rom. 13:8, 10	Love doesn't harm. It fulfills the law.	
1 Tim. 1:8	Putting a spin on God's law to achieve one's own end—to kill Jesus	