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THE SURE WORD By Jonnie Hutchison

COMMIT THE CRIME -DO THE TIME

When one violates civil law there are consequences. Breaking the speed limit may result in receiving a speeding ticket. Those who commit murder may be sentenced to serve time in prison or may even face the death penalty. The more serious the crime, the greater are the consequences. Civil law was designed by God for the good of society by protecting the innocent and penalizing the guilty, thus maintaining order and stability. Our responsibility to civil law is stated in the words of Romans 13:1ff, "Let every soul be subject to the governing authorities. For there is no authority except from God, and the authorities that exist are appointed by God. "

Those who have been convicted of crimes are notorious for failing to accept personal responsibility for their actions. In every case where a crime is committed a personal choice has been made by the one who committed it. Yet, the criminal often blames everyone but himself for his crime. Certainly, circumstances in one's life may contribute to a person making bad choices, but ultimately each of us are accountable for the choices we make. If you commit the crime, you must do the time!

God has a **spiritual law** which is designed to protect the innocent and punish the guilty. One who violates God's spiritual law commits sin (1 John 3:4). Committing sin results in separation from God (Isaiah 59:1-2), and ultimately, if not forgiven, eternal punishment in hell (Matthew 25:46; 2 Thess. 1:7-9). Our obligation to God's spiritual law is to obey it for Jesus is the "author of eternal salvation to all who obey Him" (Hebrews 5:8-9). If you choose to disobey God's spiritual law, you will suffer the consequences. Denying responsibility for your choices will not save you from the consequences of sin (romans 6:23). If you commit the crime (sin), you must do the time!

God loves you and does not want you to suffer for your sins. He has provided the means of forgiveness through the shed blood of Jesus Christ (romans 5:8-9). God's spiritual law sets forth the response all must make to receive the benefits of the blood of Jesus: belief that Jesus is the Son of God (John 8:24), repenting of sin (Acts 17:30), confessing faith in Christ (Romans 10:9-10), immersion in water into the death of Jesus for the remission of sins (Acts 2:38; Romans 6:3-5), and living as a faithful servant of the Lord (Philippians 2:12). Visit us at greenplainchurchofchrist.org.