

but that did not end the force of the regulation. However it has sometimes been questioned as to what purpose the law served if it could not fully be kept. It seems plain that its service was in these areas at a minimum:

First, it established the character of sin and righteousness. Without the law we could not know in which category we lived and there would be no assurance or direction to life. The law shows the sinfulness of sin and our failures are made specific by decree. There is hope of health when we know what is wrong and right.

Second, the reality of our inability produces a knowledge of need and a dependence on God. Men tend to be very smug and self-important until they can see their own shortcomings. When these are realized we understand that no one can live by himself or be self-sustaining in the righteous things God demands. All persons are eventually overcome by time and the law allows us in our lifetime to see our need of God.

Third, as the law has shown the character of sin and righteousness and thereby made us aware of our failures, it also directs us to the cure. It teaches us to cast ourselves upon the Lord, admitting our weaknesses and failures, while asking forgiveness and health. If God had not intended a way of forgiveness, the law would have been helpless for our need or strengthening. The way of forgiveness in the Old Testament, as well as in the New Testament, was the acceptance of God's provision for sin. It was concerned with the sacrifice and yieldedness of heart. We see the reality of this in Psalms 32 and 51 where confession and trust bring forgiveness by mercy and grace. This is not a blind enactment but an admission to God of our failure and a calling on Him for forgiveness.

In this sense the law is seen as a teacher to bring us to our senses