

What Shall I Do?

Legalism and the Christian Life

Luke 10:25-28; Coast Community Church; Pastor Earl Miles; 6-11-17

Point

One of our greatest problems is that we naturally see God as a harsh, hard-driving Lawgiver instead of a gracious, giving Father and we relate to God on the basis on Law (following rules in order to earn blessings) instead of Grace (resting in what He has freely given and living to love and please the Giver).

The solution is to see the gospel as the good news of a loving and good God who freely offers us the free gift of eternal life through faith in Jesus and His righteousness alone, apart from any works, performance or goodness on our part.

1. We are all afflicted with a legal spirit. (25)

We tend to think little of lawyers in our day and time. In reality, we are all ‘lawyers’ – in spirit: all of us are concerned about the law in our relationships with God and others.

Legalism is not:

- Loving the law/commands of God. (Psalm 119:97-104)
- Seeking to do what pleases God in all things. (2 Corinthians 5:9)
- Doing what the Bible says we should do. (1 John 2:3-6)
- Encouraging other believers to do what the Bible says to do. (Romans 15:14; Hebrews 10:24)
- Asking ‘what is right?’ and ‘what is wise?’ in every situation. (Ephesians 5:15-21)

If legalism is not these things, then the cure to legalism is not to see the law as obsolete. (Romans 3:31; 8:1-4; 1 Corinthians 7:19; 9:21)

The cure for legalism is to see what it is and what the gospel is.

2. A legal spirit is focused on what we must do (ie, Law) rather than what has been freely offered to us or done for us or given to us (ie, Grace). (25)

Kinds of legalism:

- Seeing the keeping of the law as an end in itself. (Luke 13:10-17; Matthew 23:13-14; Luke 11:42)

- Trying to obey the law as ‘rule keeping’ not ‘relationship’ with God. (Luke 18:9-14)
- Keeping the letter of the law while violating the spirit of the law. (Matthew 5:20-28; 23:25-28)
- Adding man-made laws to or in place of God’s law. (Mark 7:1-13)
- Majoring on the minors and minoring on the majors. (Matthew 23:23-24; Luke 11:42)
- Getting upset if we think we have not gotten what we deserve and others have gotten what they don’t deserve. (Matthew 20:1-16)
- Trying to keep the law in order to earn salvation. (Luke 10:30-37; 18:18-27)
- Thinking that God’s blessing is the result of my performance instead of a gift of grace. (Luke 15:11-32)

3. The solution to the legal spirit is grace, grace, grace!

- We need to recognize that we are unworthy of any of God’s blessings, no matter what we do. (Luke 17:7-10)

We have the faulty notion that we deserve special blessing for doing what we ought to do.

- A legal spirit affects how we read our Bibles. (26)
- We can read/answer rightly but think/believe wrongly. (28-29)
- It is true that there are things that must be done, but the question is who is going to do it. (28-29)
- A legal spirit does not love those that don’t deserve it and thinks God is the same way. (30-35)
- A legal spirit is challenged by exposing our inability so that we will see the way of grace that was there all the time. (36-37)
- We need to remember Eden to see the problem and see the solution. (Genesis 2:15-17; 3:1-6, 15; Romans 7:1-6)