

Legalism: It's allure and consequences

Colossians 2:20-3:4

²⁰ Since you died with Christ to the basic principles of this world, why, as though you still belonged to it, do you submit to its rules: ²¹ “Do not handle! Do not taste! Do not touch!”? ²² These are all destined to perish with use, because they are based on human commands and teachings. ²³ Such regulations indeed have an appearance of wisdom, with their self-imposed worship, their false humility and their harsh treatment of the body, but they lack any value in restraining sensual indulgence.

Legalism: its problems

1. ¹⁸ Do not let anyone who delights in false humility and the worship of angels disqualify you for the prize.
2. ²² These are all destined to perish with use
3. They are based on human commands and teachings

Legalism: its problems

- ²³ Such regulations indeed have an appearance of wisdom, with their self-imposed worship, their false humility and their harsh treatment of the body
- 4. but they lack any value in restraining sensual indulgence.

Effects of Legalism

1. Focuses primarily on self-effort
2. Produces a false sense of superiority (puffs up)
3. Tends to deal with symptoms not causes
4. Tends to major on minors

Legalism: its problems

²³ “Woe to you, teachers of the law and Pharisees, you hypocrites! You give a tenth of your spices—mint, dill and cummin. But you have neglected the more important matters of the law—justice, mercy and faithfulness. You should have practiced the latter, without neglecting the former. ²⁴ You blind guides! You strain out a gnat but swallow a camel.

5. Really does not restrain sensual desires
6. Does very little to restrain the cardinal sin of PRIDE

Legalism: its problems

7. The problem is not primarily a matter of the rules but of the heart.
8. Separates us from God rather than drawing us closer
9. Tends to separate us from the very people who need Christ the most

Holiness vs. Legalism

Since, then, you have been raised with Christ, set your hearts on things above, where Christ is seated at the right hand of God. ² Set your minds on things above, not on earthly things. ³ For you died, and your life is now hidden with Christ in God. ⁴ When Christ, who is your life, appears, then you also will appear with him in glory.

⁵ Put to death, therefore, whatever belongs to your earthly nature: sexual immorality, impurity, lust, evil desires and greed, which is idolatry. ⁶ Because of these, the wrath of God is coming. ⁷ You used to walk in these ways, in the life you once lived. ⁸ But now you must rid yourselves of all such things as these: anger, rage, malice, slander, and filthy language from your lips. ⁹ Do not lie to each other, since you have taken off your old self with its practices ¹⁰ and have put on the new self, which is being renewed in knowledge in the image of its Creator.

How is holiness different

- The answer

SINCE NOT *SO THAT*

= Love

= Gratitude

= Humility

How is holiness different

- The antithesis of legalism
 - Is not hedonism
 - Is not ambivalence that becomes lethargy
 - It is love
- Therefore one can summarize all the law and Prophets under two headings
 - Love the Lord
 - Love your neighbor

So What

- Who do you know that would have the "right" to talk to you about your legalism?
- What effects has the grace of God produced in your life?
- Are there things in your life that Jesus wants *you* to do or not do because you love him?