

Resist the Urge to Legalism

Part 5 of the Pre-eminence of Christ

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Read Col. 2:16-23

This week we are looking at what Paul has to say to the Colossians about this topic of *legalism*. Legalism is the attempt to attain salvation by law- keeping God's law. This is not possible. However, legalism can also creep its way into our lives in an attempt to attain spiritual maturity through keeping the law- God's law as well as man's.

Paul says we must resist this! Notice some observations about legalism:

1. We tend to think *others* are legalistic, but not us!
2. Legalism is highly contagious
3. Legalism can make a vibrant faith lifeless
4. Legalism produces self-righteousness, judgment and condemnation
5. Legalism makes us divisive
6. Legalism makes it impossible for people to see Jesus

1. Remember Our Legal Standing

- a. We are complete (vs. 10) - "in Him" there is nothing lacking and are righteous
- b. We are alive (vs. 13)
- c. Our sins are cancelled (vs. 13-14) – he took the law and removed it for us
- d. We have victory (vs. 15)

2. Resist the Urge of Legalism

Gal. 3:2-3 *"This only I want to learn from you: Did you receive the Spirit by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith?— 3 Are you so foolish? Having begun in the Spirit, are you now being made perfect by the flesh?"*

- a. Refuse to judge by externals (16-17)
- b. Reject false authority (18)
- c. Don't look to external rules as the measure of your spirituality (20-23)

Questions:

1. Why do you think that we all have a tendency to become *legalistic* if we are not careful? Have you been a legalist yourself or come out of that kind of life?
2. How does remembering our legal standing with God enable us to live a life for Him?
3. Consider Galatians 2:2-3. What do you think the question, “are you now being made perfect by the flesh?” means? How *are* we made perfect? (we are made perfect *in Him* – vs. 10). We must reckon this to be so in our lives.

Prayer: “Thank you, Father, for saving me from all my sins and declaring me to be complete in Jesus Christ. There is nothing I lack or need to make up for in Him. Thank You for making me alive in Christ. May I truly continue to grow in you and continue in this faith just as I began- by faith in Jesus Christ. I cannot save myself, nor can I make myself mature in Christ. This is all an act of grace on Your part. Enable me to live for You as a result of all You have accomplished for me. In Jesus’ name, amen!”