

# Why Legalism Stinks

1 Timothy 4:1-6

## **AN AGE-OLD PROBLEM**

Legalism: Any attempt to **help God out** with extra **rules** & **regulations**.

### **Nothing New Under The Sun:**

Isaiah 29:13/ Matthew 15:7-20/ Colossians 2:16-17, 20-23

## **THE PASSAGE:**

### **The When, What, Who & How:**

1 Timothy 4:1-6/ Acts 20:17-18, 29-31/ 2 Corinthians 11:14-15/ Mark 7:14-23 & Romans 14:17-18

## **WHY LEGALISM STINKS:**

Proverbs 30:5-6/ Luke 18:9-14/ Colossians 2:20-23

## **LEGALISM'S HOLY TRINITY:**

**Three verses they love to quote completely out of context.**

❶ 1 Corinthians 6:19

Your body is the **temple of the Holy Spirit**.

❷ 1 Corinthians 8:9

Never do anything that might cause the **weak to stumble**.

❸ 1 Thessalonians 5:22

Avoid every **appearance of evil**.

# Food for Thought

For the week of August 13, 2006

(Questions and Scriptures for further study)

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1. Having a clear understanding of God's law can help us avoid the trap of legalism. King David, the apostle Paul and Jesus can each give us a healthy perspective on God's law. Read the following passages and a few notes on each man's view of the law.

**David:** Psalm 1:1-3, Psalm 19:7-11

**Psalm 1:1-3**

Blessed is the man  
who does not walk in the counsel of the wicked  
or stand in the way of sinners  
or sit in the seat of mockers.  
[2] But his delight is in the law of the Lord,  
and on his law he meditates day and night.  
[3] He is like a tree planted by streams of water,  
which yields its fruit in season  
and whose leaf does not wither.  
Whatever he does prospers. [NIV]

**Psalm 19:7-11**

The law of the Lord is perfect,  
reviving the soul.  
The statutes of the Lord are trustworthy,  
making wise the simple.  
[8] The precepts of the Lord are right,  
giving joy to the heart.  
The commands of the Lord are radiant,  
giving light to the eyes.  
[9] The fear of the Lord is pure,  
enduring forever.  
The ordinances of the Lord are sure  
and altogether righteous.  
[10] They are more precious than gold,  
than much pure gold;  
they are sweeter than honey,  
than honey from the comb.  
[11] By them is your servant warned;  
in keeping them there is great reward. [NIV]

**Paul:** Romans 3:19-24, Romans 7:7

**Romans 3:19-24**

Now we know that whatever the law says, it says to those who are under the law, so that every mouth may be silenced and the whole world held accountable to God. [20] Therefore no one will be

declared righteous in his sight by observing the law; rather, through the law we become conscious of sin.

[21] But now a righteousness from God, apart from law, has been made known, to which the Law and the Prophets testify. [22] This righteousness from God comes through faith in Jesus Christ to all who believe. There is no difference, [23] for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, [24] and are justified freely by his grace through the redemption that came by Christ Jesus. [NIV]

### **Romans 7:7**

What shall we say, then? Is the law sin? Certainly not! Indeed I would not have known what sin was except through the law. For I would not have known what coveting really was if the law had not said, "Do not covet." [NIV]

**Jesus:** Matthew 22:34-40

### **Matthew 22:34-40**

Hearing that Jesus had silenced the Sadducees, the Pharisees got together. [35] One of them, an expert in the law, tested him with this question: [36] "Teacher, which is the greatest commandment in the Law?"

[37] Jesus replied: " 'Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.' [38] This is the first and greatest commandment. [39] And the second is like it: 'Love your neighbor as yourself.' [40] All the Law and the Prophets hang on these two commandments." [NIV]

How do these passages help us understand the law without becoming legalistic?

2. Jesus pointed out a number of ways that the Pharisees were being legalistic in Luke 11:37-54. Read the passage and jot down the parallels between Jesus' words and Larry's reasons "why legalism stinks."

### **Luke 11:37-54**

When Jesus had finished speaking, a Pharisee invited him to eat with him; so he went in and reclined at the table. [38] But the Pharisee, noticing that Jesus did not first wash before the meal, was surprised. [39] Then the Lord said to him, "Now then, you Pharisees clean the outside of the cup and dish, but inside you are full of greed and wickedness. [40] You foolish people! Did not the one who made the outside make the inside also? [41] But give what is inside the dish to the poor, and everything will be clean for you.

[42] "Woe to you Pharisees, because you give God a tenth of your mint, rue and all other kinds of garden herbs, but you neglect justice and the love of God. You should have practiced the latter without leaving the former undone.

[43] "Woe to you Pharisees, because you love the most important seats in the synagogues and greetings in the marketplaces.

[44] "Woe to you, because you are like unmarked graves, which men walk over without knowing it."

[45] One of the experts in the law answered him, "Teacher, when you say these things, you insult us also."

[46] Jesus replied, "And you experts in the law, woe to you, because you load people down with burdens they can hardly carry, and you yourselves will not lift one finger to help them.

[47] "Woe to you, because you build tombs for the prophets, and it was your forefathers who killed them.

[48] So you testify that you approve of what your forefathers did; they killed the prophets, and you build their tombs. [49] Because of this, God in his wisdom said, 'I will send them prophets and apostles, some of whom they will kill and others they will persecute.'

[50] Therefore this generation will be held responsible for the blood of all the prophets that has been shed since the beginning of the world, [51] from the blood of Abel to the blood of Zechariah, who was killed between the altar and the sanctuary. Yes, I tell you, this generation will be held responsible for it all.

[52] "Woe to you experts in the law, because you have taken away the key to knowledge. You yourselves have not entered, and you have hindered those who were entering."

[53] When Jesus left there, the Pharisees and the teachers of the law began to oppose him fiercely and to besiege him with questions, [54] waiting to catch him in something he might say. [NIV]

Write down how each of the Pharisee's attempts to "help God out with extra rules and regulations" could become a temptation in your life.

3. This weekend we were encouraged to stand fast in our freedom but to avoid flaunting or abusing it. What do the following verses encourage us to do with our freedom?

#### **Galatians 5:13-15**

You, my brothers, were called to be free. But do not use your freedom to indulge the sinful nature; rather, serve one another in love. [14] The entire law is summed up in a single command: "Love your neighbor as yourself." [15] If you keep on biting and devouring each other, watch out or you will be destroyed by each other. [NIV]

#### **1 Peter 2:13-17**

Submit yourselves for the Lord's sake to every authority instituted among men: whether to the king, as the supreme authority, [14] or to governors, who are sent by him to punish those who do wrong and to commend those who do right. [15] For it is God's will that by doing good you should silence the ignorant talk of foolish men. [16] Live as free men, but do not use your freedom as a cover-up for evil; live as servants of God. [17] Show proper respect to everyone: Love the brotherhood of believers, fear God, honor the king. [NIV]

#### **Romans 6:22-23**

But now that you have been set free from sin and have become slaves to God, the benefit you reap leads to holiness, and the result is eternal life. [23] For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord. [NIV]