

Are You Living By Rules or a Relationship?
Life Overflowing! A Study of Colossians—Part 14
Colossians 2:20-23
May 26, 2024

“God forgave us all our sins, having canceled the written code, with its regulations, that was against us and that stood opposed to us; he took it away, nailing it to the cross.” --Colossians 2:14

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!’ ²²These are all destined to perish with use, because they are based on human commands and teachings. ²³Such 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.”

In this message we’ll consider both the misery of legalism and the joy of God’s grace:

I. The Miserable _____ of Legalism

Legalism is the attitude I can establish or improve my standing before God by my _____.

“Are you so foolish? After beginning with the Spirit, are you now trying to attain your goal by human effort?”--Galatians 3:3

But legalism only leads to frustration and misery— why?

1. Legalism gives a sense of accomplishment, but you can _____
2. Legalism enslaves you to _____ religion
3. Legalism _____ the Lord

In Matthew 23 Jesus said to legalists:

- “You hypocrites! You shut the kingdom of heaven in men’s faces.” (vs. 13)
- “You make him [a convert] twice as much a son of hell as you are.” (vs. 15)
- “You blind guides! You strain out a gnat and swallow a camel!” (vs. 24)
- “You are like whitewashed tombs” (vs. 27)
- “You snakes! You brood of vipers! How will you escape being condemned to hell?” (vs. 33)

II. The Wonderful _____ of Grace

“I do not set aside the grace of God, for if righteousness could be gained through the law, Christ died for nothing!...It is for freedom that Christ has set us free. Stand firm, then, and do not let yourselves be burdened again by a yoke of slavery.”--Galatians 2:21; 5:1

Notice two liberating aspects of grace:

1. Grace removes the _____ to perform
“At just the right time, when we were still powerless, Christ died for the ungodly.”--Romans 5:6

2. Grace frees you to _____ your relationship with God
Jesus said, “If you love me, you will obey what I command”--John 14:15

“Why do you try to test God by putting on the necks of the disciples a yoke neither we nor our fathers have been able to bear? No! We believe it is by the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ we are saved, just as they are.”
--Acts 15:10-11

Jesus said, “Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy and my burden is light.”--Matthew 11:28-30

The Bible says, “The way of the transgressor is hard!”--Proverbs 13:15

But God asks, “Is anything too HARD for me?”--Jeremiah 32:27