

# Romans: The Crown Jewel of Salvation

## 26 - Avoiding Legalism by Leaving the Shadows

Romans 7:1-6

Grace Fellowship Church / Pastor Brad Bigney / March 9, 2014

"I have written about legalism partly because of my own bruising encounters with it and partly because I believe it represents such a powerful temptation to the church. Legalism stands like a stripper on the sidelines of faith, seducing us toward an easier way. It teases, promising some of the benefits of faith but unable to deliver what matters most. As Paul wrote to the legalists of his day, 'For the kingdom of God is not a matter of eating and drinking, but of righteousness, peace and joy in the Holy Spirit.'" *What's So Amazing About Grace?* Philip Yancey, pg. 209

"Legalism is seeking to ACHIEVE forgiveness *from* God and ACCEPTANCE *by* God through OBEDIENCE *to* God. In other words, a legalist is anyone who behaves as if they can earn God's approval and forgiveness through PERSONAL PERFORMANCE." CJ Mahaney

### I. Stay Focused On Your New Love For Christ –

*You have a Husband – Jesus Christ!*

You've got a LOVER now; not a LAWYER. He's a husband that already GAVE His life for us. He loves us!

### II. Stay Mindful of Your New Power to Change –

*You've Got the Power of the Holy Spirit*

If you're a Christian, then God's given you the Spirit of Christ LIVING IN YOU to empower you to put to sin to death!

WALK in the Spirit... keep IN STEP with the Spirit... and be LED by the Spirit... so that you'll not fulfill the lusts of the flesh.

**John 10:27** "My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me."

The Christian life is a life of listening to and following Jesus Christ by the Spirit of Christ living in you!

**Romans 8:12-17** "Therefore, brethren, we are debtors – not to the flesh, to live according to the flesh. For if you live according to the flesh you will die; but if *by the Spirit* you put to death the deeds of the body, you will live. For as many as are *led by the Spirit of God*, these are the sons of God."

**Galatians 5:16-18, 24-25** "I say then: Walk in the Spirit, and you shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh... but if you are led by the Spirit, you are *not under the law*... and those who are Christ's have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires. If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk (keep in step with) in the Spirit."

### III. Stay Grateful for Your New Position in Christ

**Romans 7:6** "But now we have been delivered from the law, having died to what we were held by, so that we should serve in the newness of the Spirit and not in the oldness of the letter."

A covenant is a written agreement between two parties that makes certain PROMISES and requires certain BEHAVIOR.

**2 Corinthians 3:3-6** "Clearly you are an epistle of Christ, ministered by us, written not with ink but by the Spirit of the living God, not on tablets of stone but on tablets of flesh, that is, of the heart. And we have such trust through Christ toward God. Not that we are sufficient of ourselves to think of anything as being from ourselves, but our sufficiency is from God, who also made us sufficient as ministers of the new covenant, not of the letter but of the Spirit; for the letter kills, but the Spirit gives life."

Every Christian is part of a new covenant of life – not of death. A covenant of the Spirit – not the letter of the law.

**v. 7-8 Paul calls the Law the “ministry of death”**

“But if the ministry of death, written and engraved on stones, was glorious... how will the ministry of the Spirit not be more glorious?”

**v. 9 “Paul calls the Law the “ministry of condemnation”**

“For if the ministry of condemnation had glory, the ministry of righteousness exceeds much more in glory.”

As a Christian, you’re part of a ministry now that’s much more glorious – because the focus of this ministry is the Lord Jesus Christ.

**Hebrews 10:1** *NLT* “The old system in the law of Moses was only a shadow of the things to come, not the reality of the good things Christ has done for us.”

The word 'Better' is used 13x in the book of Hebrews!

- 7:19 We have a better hope
- 7:22 Jesus is the guarantee of a better covenant
- 8:6 Jesus is the Mediator of a better covenant
- 9:23 Jesus has offered a better sacrifice

Going back to the law is like saying, “I’m going to show my wife how much I love her by trying to please my ex-wife!” But that’s crazy! And that’s the word Paul used to describe Christians who start out with the Spirit of God but then turn back to the law thinking that’s how they’re going to change and grow.

**Galatians 3:1, 3** *The Message* “You crazy Galatians! Did someone put a hex on you? Have you taken leave of your senses? Something crazy has happened, for it’s obvious that you no longer have the crucified Jesus in clear focus in your lives... Are you going to continue this craziness? For only crazy people would think they could complete by their own efforts what was begun by God.”

**2 Cor 3:16-18** “Nevertheless when one turns to the Lord, the veil is taken away. Now the Lord is the Spirit; and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty. But we all, with unveiled face, beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, just as by the Spirit of the Lord.”

*The Message* “...God is a living, personal presence, not a piece of chiseled stone. And when God is personally present, a living Spirit, that old, constricting legislation is recognized as obsolete. We’re free of it! All of us! Nothing between us and God, our faces shining with the brightness of His face. And so we are transfigured much like the Messiah, our lives gradually becoming brighter and more beautiful as God enters our lives and we become like Him.”

We’re changed more and more into the image of Christ as we look to Him and spend time with Him and listen to Him.

**Romans 8:31-39**

Trying to use the law to achieve a life keeps you in a constant state of agitation... UPSET that you’re never good enough... whereas looking to Christ and receiving a life makes you GRATEFUL for what you’ve been given.

“Christianity is not primarily a moral code but a grace-laden mystery; it is not essentially a philosophy of love but a love affair; it is not keeping rules with clenched fists but receiving a gift with open hands. Several years ago, the renowned evangelical theologian Francis Schaeffer wrote: ‘True spirituality consists in living moment by moment by the grace of Jesus Christ.’ *The Ragamuffin Gospel*, Brennan Manning, p. 214-215

**2 Corinthians 11:2-4** “I am jealous for you with a godly jealousy. I promised you to one husband, to Christ, so that I might present you as a pure virgin to him. But I am afraid that just as Eve was deceived by the serpent’s cunning, your minds may somehow be led astray from your sincere and pure devotion to Christ.”

- Do you know what it feels like to REST in the righteousness of Jesus Christ?
- Is the focus of your Christian life about a relationship with Jesus Christ or is it something else?
- And are you still suffocating under the law... trying to earn God’s approval through your personal performance?

Throw down the big stick of the law and step into the sunshine!