

FREEDOM FROM LEGALISM.

(Kaikohe CF - 19/11/89 - EKB)

1. Many believe that we will go to heaven and be accepted by God if we do enough good deeds such as, helping beggars, helping needy people with food, drink, clothing and shelter, worshipping “gods”, offering sacrifices to idols, making pilgrimages to holy shrines.

Legalism is man’s attempt to please God and be accepted by Him through obeying a code of laws or rules, and obtaining merit by doing good deeds. **Read Rom 3:20-24,28, Rom 10:4, Eph 2:8,9.**

2. **All religions of the world today** except one, (that is, Biblical faith in Jesus Christ as Lord and Saviour) believe that we are saved and accepted by God by doing good deeds, by man’s own efforts to please God. Possibly this is the devil’s No 1 lie. It is also the “religion” of the “non-religious” man of the world, who says, “I’ve lived a good life, I’ve never done any harm to anyone else, nobody’s perfect, I’m as good as anyone else,” as well as the religion of the devout Hindu, Buddhist, or Moslem who believes that by doing good deeds he will gain eternal life and heaven.
3. If it were possible to put one’s self right with God by good works then the death of Christ on the Cross was **unnecessary**, and a **wasted effort**. “Salvation by works” is the religion of man who has been deceived by satan, and is followed by those who do not accept faith in the Blood of Jesus and the resurrection as the only grounds of our justification before God, and eternal life.
4. **Legalism believes we get saved by what we do**, whereas Biblical Christianity believes that we get saved **by what we believe**. *Tit 3:5, Rom 5:1,2, Gal 5:4, Gal 3:1-3,5-9, Gal 2:16, Phil 3:9, Rom 4:1-12.* And also see Scriptures under No 1 above.
5. “**How many good deeds** do you have to do to obtain forgiveness of your sins?” I asked a devout Hindu inquirer one day. He had no idea. There is only one provision in all creation that can forgive sins, and that is found in *1Pet 2:24*. “Christ Himself bore our sins in His own Body on the tree, that we, having died to sins, might live for righteousness - by whose stripes we were healed.” See also *1Pet 3:18, 1Jn 1:7,9, Jn 3:16, Mat 1:21, 2Cor 5:21.* We are able to receive this provision of God’s grace by faith in Christ, by believing and accepting that His death paid the full price for all our sins, *Ac 16:31.*
6. **Legalism says**, “I am working to save myself by my own good deeds, and efforts.” **Faith in God’s grace** says, “I am unable to save myself by my own good works. It is only the salvation that God has provided through Jesus Christ by faith that can put me right with God, keep me right with God, and fulfil all of His plans and purposes in my life.”
7. **Legalism however can be a continuing problem** in a believer’s life and it shows itself in the following ways.
 - a. A sense of **striving** to put one’s self right with God and to earn His blessing and favour. E.g. It may be a striving to witness to the unsaved out of a feeling of duty or pressure from other people.
 - b. An attitude of **self-righteousness** as displayed in *Lk 15:25-30, Lk 18: 9-12.*

- c. **Keeping a set of rules** of right and wrong to achieve holiness of life, instead of making decisions on the basis of what is life giving, in the power of the Spirit by faith, *Col 2:16-23*.
 - d. **A feeling of guilt, failure**, condemnation and unworthiness before God, *Is 1:18, Rom 8:1-12, Eph 1:6*.
 - e. **Awareness of bondage**, heaviness, lack of liberty, lack of joy, peace, and freedom in Christ, *Gal 5:1,13, Mat 11:28,29*.
 - f. **Self concern**. Always being concerned about how you are getting on compared to others in their spiritual walk, *2Cor 10:12, Jn 21:22*.
8. Every aspect of legalism is a failure to lay hold of God's promised supply of grace, by faith in the promises of His Word. Go to the Word, find the promises of God which apply to the area of need, and establish a faith response, *2Pet 1:3,4, 2Cor 1:20*.
9. *Eph 2:8* tells us that we receive God's grace by faith in His Word.
Gal 5:6 tells us that our faith works out to others by love.
Gal 5:13 tells us that love expresses itself in service to others.