

Resurrection Life of Jesus Church

RELATIONSHIPS THAT PLEASE GOD

RLJ-1200

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PART 1B: WHAT GOD INTENDED

LEGALISM

“Legalism” is a term that is not found in the Bible just like the “rapture” is not present either but both terms have been used for so many years that Christians just flow with the tradition without asking any questions. In order to continue this series, I want to take the time and address “legalism.”

There is much confusion in the Christian churches regarding salvation by faith and observing the commandments given by God throughout the Bible. Let me share this statement, which was recently sent to me:

“...according to Galatians 5:4 “Christ is become of no effect unto you, whosoever of you are justified by the law; ye are fallen from grace.” (I am not allowed to celebrate Christmas if I want to be blessed...etc). And if we step out from being under grace and place ourselves under the law again, we are required to keep the whole law (which of course no man can) and so we are fair game for the Devil.”

Then the person says the following:

“We do not want to share material which brings people into bondage of legalism as described with the example of celebrating Christmas. We ourselves don’t do it, but if someone else (a Christian) celebrates Christmas this is no problem for us. The same goes for drinking alcohol, eating different foods, etc. We ourselves don’t do it and we will recommend people not to do it because it is wise and healthy, but not because they will otherwise come under a curse.”

A BIBLICAL RESPONSE

This person represents millions of Christians who hold the same viewpoint so let me now share from the Bible what it teaches us:

The salvation teaching in the Old Testament is the same as in the New Testament; salvation is by grace, not by works, and a gift from God that man cannot work for in any way shape or form. **Romans 4:1-5; Ephesians 2:8-10**

Jesus made a strong point in His teaching that He was not here to destroy or void out the law but to fulfill it; furthermore, the Jewish people had to exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees if they wanted to enter the kingdom of heaven. There were no more dedicated people than these two Jewish groups, and yet according to Jesus, it was still not enough. Only by being clothed in the righteousness of Christ can a man exceed the scribes and the Pharisees. **Matthew 5:17-20; Romans 3:20-28**



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God's eternal salvation is not obtained by good works or keeping God's laws but is a free gift from God.

Salvation cannot be earned and we are not required to do good works or keep God's laws in order to keep our salvation.

It is a onetime event when you repent of your sins, accept Christ's shed blood as the atonement on the cross and accept Jesus as Lord and Saviour.

We must learn to separate salvation from living our lives on earth while we are waiting to be transferred to heaven.

HOW SHOULD A CHRISTIAN LIVE?

When I preached the series on the Book of Acts some time ago I came to realize the enormity of the task that faced the apostles. God had given Moses and the prophet's His laws and statues which He wanted the people of Israel to obey. Here is what I brought out in "Back to the Book of Acts:"

1. All the apostles believed that Jesus would return to set up His kingdom in their lifetime; therefore, there was no need to build any type of organization but focus on getting people saved and ready for the second coming of Jesus.
2. The Jewish believers already had the knowledge and education of how to live a godly life on earth based upon the instructions given by God in the Old Testament. Since Jesus was imminently coming back, they felt there was no need to teach the Gentiles about God's laws for living on the earth but just give them the essentials. **Acts 15:1-29**
3. As time progressed and the apostles started to die one-by-one, it became clear to them that Jesus might not come back in their lifetime and that they better start writing things down for future generations. **2 Peter 1:14-21**
4. Over time the apostles realized the decision they had made in Jerusalem (Acts 15) was not adequate for the believers in Christ coming out from among the heathen nations around Israel. There needed to be a written doctrine by which they could live. Thus the four Gospels were written with the epistles by Peter, Paul, James, John and Jude.

All these historical accounts and epistles are admonitions to Jewish and Gentile believers in Christ on how to live out their lives after they had been saved by grace. I cannot stress this enough that **salvation is a onetime experience to give us eternal life in heaven! It is total grace! No law!**

Living for Christ on this earth in our flesh is a call to holiness and obedience! Jesus said: "If you love me, keep my commandments." **John 14:15**

None of the apostles stated that they themselves were obedient to God but that it was up to the individual believer in Christ if they wanted to be or not!

PICK AND CHOOSE

Many Christians have been taught how to live their Christian lives on earth through picking and choosing. If there is a commandment from God they don't like, they believe they have the right to pick and choose what to obey since they are saved by grace. This leads to anarchy and much confusion.

- ❖ Which one of the Ten Commandments can I drop?
- ❖ Can I keep my pagan traditions and still be blessed by God?
- ❖ Is it all right to live with a woman and not marry her?
- ❖ Is it all right to be a homosexual?
- ❖ Is it all right to become addicted to some kind of substance? Aren't tobacco, opium, and alcohol all part of the creation and didn't God say it was all good?
- ❖ Can I dance and fellowship with other women when I am married as long as I do not have sexual intercourse?
- ❖ Is it ok to masturbate as long as I don't use pornographic material?

If you are a born again believer in Christ who read a real Bible and not a bastard Bible, there is no way you can answer yes to any of those questions. Let's look at what Jesus said to Moses and what He later told the apostles. **Deuteronomy 28:1-15; Matthew 5:17-19**

QUESTION TO ASK

We do know that all laws and statues regarding the sacrificial laws in the Old Testament have been fulfilled by Jesus and are not to be continued. **Hebrews 9:11-26**

But is there any reference in the Bible where we are told that a Christian doesn't have to obey the rest of God's laws and statues? No, we find that the apostle Paul states the opposite. **Romans 3:31**

There is no way in good conscience that I can tell people since we are saved by grace they don't have to obey God's laws!

Every believer in Christ must prayerfully study these Scriptures and come to their own conclusion. No man can make a decision for you.

Remember, it's not so important how you begin your life after salvation, but how you finish it!

DO YOU HAVE AN EAR TO HEAR WITH?