

“Legalism is a Show” | Galatians 6:11-13
Pastor Jason Huffman | 10/9/22

Teaching Notes

Do you like to see a show?

Paul’s wrapping up his letter with some important closing remarks
Out title is Legalism is a Show.

Paul is saying, the Legalists are producing a show, it is not real life or real faith.

6:11 See with what large letters I have written to you with my own hand! 12 As many as desire to make a good showing in the flesh, these *would* compel you to be circumcised, only that they may not suffer persecution for the cross of Christ. 13 For not even those who are circumcised keep the law, but they desire to have you circumcised that they may boast in your flesh.

This is not a sticky note...this is a giant poster!

This is a big deal so he is using big letters.

Some think Paul had a problem with his eyes

The letter was dictated to a scribe sort of person.

And then he wrote the salutation or the closing.

—Some think he used large letters to see, others for emphasis.

Either way, Paul is writing because the gospel is a big deal.

There are things that are important...

... and then there are things that are more important.

The gospel is more important.

Parchment wasn’t cheap, scrolls weren’t cheap...

...space was money.

It is interesting to think about what we give space to...

Sometimes urgent things overshadow the important things.

where do we put our priorities.

where we are willing to invest.

If you wanna know your values, check your credit card statement and your calendar.

Just like the limited parchment...

...our life, our service, our time, our money is limited...

That’s why we invest eternally with hope and purpose!

12 As many as desire to make a good showing in the flesh, these *would* compel you to be circumcised,

So this is where Paul talks about making a show.
And that's really what legalism is...it is a show.

1. **Legalists live for looks.**

The legalist is always thinking about what things look like.
What is the appearance?

Like some sort of producer...or YouTube influencer...
...they are overly concerned with what they look like.

Make sure to put yourself in the best light.
Make sure to use a good filter.
Make sure to only show what you want seen.
It is the outward appearance that matters to them.

Do they look holy? Do they seem spiritual?
But unfortunately, that is not what God cares about.

I Samuel 16:7 But the Lord said to Samuel, "Do not look at his appearance or at his physical stature, because I have [a]refused him. For *the Lord does not see* as man sees; for man looks at the outward appearance, but the Lord looks at the heart."

Their priorities were not God's priorities...
...so it doesn't matter what it looks like on the outside...
...they were missing the mark.

2. **Legalists live for likes.**

Do they like me?
Are they impressed by me?
Do they respect me?
They should be thinking, do they see Jesus in me?

Really, if our lives are a show...
...it should be for an audience of one.
God is our audience of one...
...everyone else is just the peanut gallery.

The least expensive snack served at the theatre would often be peanuts, which the patrons would sometimes throw at the performers on stage to convey their disapproval. Phrases such as "no comments from the peanut gallery" or "quiet in the peanut gallery" are extensions of the name.

So what does God think is important?

What does God desire?

Matthew 6:33 But seek first the kingdom of God & His righteousness

I Peter 2:15 15 For this is the will of God, that by doing good you may put to silence the ignorance of foolish men

I Thessalonians 4:3 3 For this is the will of God, your sanctification: that you should abstain from sexual immorality;

I Thessalonians 5:18 18 in everything give thanks; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you.

Micah 6:7-8 Will the Lord be pleased with thousands of rams,
Ten thousand rivers of oil?

Shall I give my firstborn *for* my transgression,
The fruit of my body *for* the sin of my soul?

8 He has shown you, O man, what *is* good; And what does the Lord require of you But to do justly, To love mercy,
And to walk humbly with your God?

These are the things God likes.

These will help us have a real and right relationship with God.

We can't live according to the standard we like...

...And we can't live according to the standard others like...

We can't live for the approval of others...

... and think we will be approved by God.

The approval we seek, the likes we want are from God and...

...those who love God and are approved by God do often approve

3. Legalists are not spiritual.

Paul says they want to **make a good showing in the flesh.**

The outward things they do are not motivated by inward values.

They don't have spiritual insight.
They lack spiritual discernment.

**They see things at face value...
... and from the outward appearance.**

It looks good, it sounds good, it feels good...
...But they don't consider if it is good...
...Because what is good comes from God.

Examples:

A long prayer from the outward looks and sounds good, but not if it is coming from an arrogant heart.

The ability to quote lots of Scripture seems great outwardly but not if it is coming from a disobedient heart.

Consistent attendance at church looks good but not if it is coming from a heart that just wants the approval of men.

“these *would* compel you to be circumcised”

4. Legalists are sellers.

Legalists are like pushy sales people.
They compel people.

Compel means: **to necessitate, compel, drive to, constrain**, whether by force, threats, etc., or by persuasion, entreaties,

They make threats, they persuade or just outright beg.

This is why at some churches or with some religious people it feels like they are trying to sell you something!

They want you to join their church to make them look good or make them feel good not so you can grow or know Christ.

They want you to agree with their doctrinal stance for their status not because they think it is true and healthy and good for you.

The difference between a salesperson and a friend is who they care about.

If I care about you, I am your friend...

...But if I care about me, I'm just trying to sell you something.

And that is even the difference oftentimes between...
... successful and unsuccessful sales people...
...the most successful people believe in their product...
...and want you to enjoy it.

I think that's how we should share Christ...

Because we truly believe Him and He changed our life...
...we want them to believe it too.

Make a buck, get promoted, or look good for someone...
...or maybe not get in trouble or not get fired is their motive.

Some sell for pleasure, some sell to avoid pain.

That's the motive here...to avoid persecution for Christ.
these *would* compel you to be circumcised, only that they may not suffer persecution for the cross of Christ.

They want to avoid the difficulty of the cross so they play both sides

They follow Christ and please the Christians.
But they follow circumcision to please the Jews.

Maybe they don't want anyone making waves.

The Jewish religion was approved by the Roman govt...
...whereas Christianity didn't have that status.

But-Sometimes if you play both sides, you lose both sides.

If there are two girls you like and you are playing them both...
When they find out, you will probably lose them both.
You have to commit to one side and stick with it.

And the cross of Christ is an offensive commitment.

The cross is humiliating and lowly and deadly for our flesh.

...And people don't always like that, it is also...
...the power of God for salvation & Satan doesn't like that either!

13 For not even those who are circumcised keep the law,
5. Legalist are actors.

The Biblical word for actor is...hypocrite.

This is what Jesus often called the Pharisees and lawyers.
Hypocrites.

It just means they put on a mask to play a role.

They are not really who they seem to be.

They just become who they want you to see them to be.

These look like law keepers because they got circumcised.

They cut off the flesh physically...

...but they are still living in the flesh personally.

They want you to do what they don't do or won't do.

There are actors that play surfers...

...and there are surfers that play actors.

...And neither work well.

6. Legalists live for the show

but they desire to have you circumcised that they may boast in your flesh.

They don't boast in inward life change.

They don't boast in growing faith.

They boast in outward appearance.

They boast in the fleshly things.

...About numbers instead of knowing God.

...About appearance instead of reality.

Instead of...How many chapters did I read?

...how about What did I learn or hear from God?

Instead of...How many people did I share with?

...Who did I love today?

Instead of...how many Scriptures do I know?

...how am I living what I know?

Checking numbers isn't bad...

...but checking motives is paramount.

>>> In closing...

A show is dramatized, edited, & produced for consumption..
...But our lives are not meant to be shows...
...Our lives are real.

The closest thing I saw recently was a vlog.

The angles were not optimal,
the sound was not always that great,
there were boring spots and
some less than flattering content.

But that is real life...

...and the ones that really care about you will stick with you.

God is the one who cares the most.
God is the one who sticks closer than a brother.
God is the one who we need to focus on.

Don't live your life for show, live it for real...

...Just live like an ordinary human for an extraordinary God.

God made us human.
And that is how God works and that is what God wants to see.
And it is His glory revealed in our real lives.

We are imperfect but perfectly loved.
We are weak but empowered by His Spirit.
We are boring and full of drama, but He is always watched.

He died and rose again so that we could live this crazy life in Him and for His pleasure.

Discussion Questions

1. How can we balance caring about what people think of us and being motivated by the approval of others?
2. Have you ever had "comments from the peanut gallery"? How do you handle that kind of thing?
3. Does it influence how you read the Bible when you are looking for what God desires?
4. How do you feel when you think you are being sold something? How are selling and caring different?

5. Why do you think people don't like the cross?
6. How can we encourage each other to live for real and not for show?