

The Simplicity of the Christian Life

Intro: Where do you find legalistic tendencies in yourself? Legalism was one of the biggest problems of the early church. Paul traveled In 46AD on his first missionary journey through the region of Galatia, in modern day Turkey. He led many to Christ. But By 49AD, 3 years later, the Galatian church had mixed law with grace. They understood they were saved by grace through faith but now they were trying to sanctify or mature themselves by human effort. This struggle is not only a struggle for the early church but also a struggles for each one of us today. Read Gal 3:1-3.

- **Root of Legalism is maturing ourselves by our own effort:** *Gal 3:3 – NET, “Are you so foolish? Although you began with the Spirit, are you now trying to finish with human effort?”*
 - Creating our own standards and then measuring our spirituality by whether we meet our own standards
 - Example of measuring our spirituality by whether we read x amount of scripture and pray x amount every day.
 - Legalism is rooted in the flesh.
 - Self strength, self abilities.
 - Flesh causes corruption: *Gal 5:19*
 - If we control ourselves in one area, the flesh will pop up in another area.
 - Discipline yourself in the spiritual realm, 5 church activities every week, pray 1.5 hours every day, discipling people personally, rely on our system to find our worth, identity or to mature ourselves when we meet it results in pride, “I’m better than everyone” or comparison, “I’m not worth much because I don’t do as much as they do”
 - After talking about these examples where do you find legalistic tendencies in yourself?
 - In your work, in your spiritual life, relationships with others, or something else. Maybe you see a few tendencies here or there may the whole core of your being struggles with legalism with maturing yourself by your own effort.
 - My major legalistic tendency has been, The lie that I have to be perfect, I can’t fail. That is legalistic to its core. It is slavery and its end is corruption.
 - Living in legalism only causes corruption and destruction, so how do we get out of it?
 - **TRANS:** change in living how do we live. **On the outside, at times, it looks the same but it’s a very different heart.** It begins with recognizing the change in the core of the Christian life. From legalism which depends on human strength to living by Christ in us.

The root of our lives as Christians is not rules and standards but Christ living in us. *“It is no longer I who live but Christ who lives in me” – Gal 2:20*

- Three types of Christians - PJ
 - Christians living for self
 - Christians living for Christ

- Christians letting Christ live through them
- Christians living for self
 - Living for the flesh, being ruled by their flesh, anger, jealousy bitterness, and fine with it, focus is “what I want”
 - We all fall into this category at times, if the Spirit is showing us, we have an opportunity to change by Christ’s power
- Christians living for Christ
 - Desire to live for Christ
 - Desire is correct but the method is off
 - Sometimes legalism is the method we choose to live for Christ. We set more self-imposed standards, more activities, more devotions, consider ourselves failures when we don’t live up to what we’ve set and in turn, we miss the relationship with Christ.
 - How?
 - Do more
 - Discipline yourself
 - Be a better Christian
 - Go to church activities
 - Try harder
 - Root of these things is often our own strength, our own desire
 - We are living
 - Paul says, “it is no longer I who live”
- Christians letting Christ live through them
 - The source, power, energy comes from Christ

How do we allow Christ to live through us?

- Abide – learning to rest in Christ *John 15:4-5*
 - Focus is not fruit but abiding
 - Being, then doing
 - Relationship first, love first, obedience not earning
 - Relationship, not system
 - **APP: where is your focus? On the fruit or on simply resting in Christ?**
- Through the Spirit, by faith, in love *Summary of Galatians*
 - Faith – Gal 2:20, “the life I now live in the flesh, I live by faith in the Son of God”
 - Love – Gal 5:14, “For the whole law is fulfilled in one word”
 - Spirit – Gal 5:5, “For through the Spirit, by faith we ourselves eagerly wait for the hope of righteousness”
 - Essence of faith is dependence on God
 - Learning to trust his word, his spirit’s direction
 - Sometimes its easy and restful, other times he pushes out of our comfort zone
 - Faith results in obedience
 - When we trust someone, we do what they ask of us
 - Allowing Christ to live through us is never complete without obedience
 - Disobedience reveals we don’t trust Christ but instead trust ourselves or our fear instead of Christ

- **APP: Obey in Faith. Let that dependence on God lead you to obedience.**
 - Motives switch from fear and pride to love
 - If we allow God to dig down inside, I think we will see that sometimes our action have wrong motivations. We do this because we were bitter or angry, or even in those thing that looked good on the outside, they may have motivated by pride or fighting for people's acceptance on the inside.
 - **APP: Why do you do what you do? Is it because you love God/love the individual you are doing this for or do you do this out of fear, for others acceptance, for revenge, etc. Allow God to sort that out.**
 - Learning to live by with the spirit
 - Hiking analogy, keep in step with your hiking analogy *hiking with Lehvi*
 - Focus is relationship first
 - When hiking primary enjoyment is relationship with the person you are hiking with. The goal of getting to the top is second.
 - Spirit brings us into a personal relationship with the Father
 - Surrender to the Spirit's leading
 - Example of hiking at the summit with Lehvi, surrendering to his leading at the top.
 - Surrender to the spirit's leading and letting him work his gifts in me - PJ
 - Listen to the timing of the spirit – Gal 5:25, *Let us also keep in step with the Spirit*
 - When hiking with someone, keep pace with them, sometimes you run, sometimes you lay on the side of the mountain and enjoy the sun, sometimes you walk
 - Listen to the spirit, obey now, idea on your heart for later.
 - Spirit will interrupt, give detours. When you hear something, follow it. - PJ
 - When hiking, other person, sometimes they will see something you don't. berry bush, bear, etc.
 - In the same way spirit sees things we don't, listen to his interruptions and detours.
- **Conclusion: The core of the Christian life is not living by rules and regulations, it is allowing Christ to live through us. Learning to abide in Christ, live by the Spirit, in faith as we love God and those around us.**