

Part 2 – “The Danger of Legalism & a Seared Conscience”, 1 Timothy 4:1–5
Pastor Shawn Newberry, May 3, 2026

I. The Warning (vv. 1–2)

- Some will depart from the faith
- Devoted to:
 - Deceitful spirits
 - Teachings of demons
- Marked by:
 - **Insincerity (hypocrisy)** = “playing a part”
 - **Seared conscience** = no spiritual sensitivity

Legalism is dangerous because it looks like righteousness.

II. The Progression of Legalism

1. **Zeal** → **Pride** (truth over God Himself)
2. **Pride** → **Comparison/Judgment**
3. **Comparison** → **Exclusivism**
4. **Exclusivism** → **More Rules**
5. **Rules** → **Seared Conscience** (truth without a merciful heart)

Legalism shifts focus from Christ → self

III. The Source: False Light

- **2 Cor. 11:13–15** → false righteousness
- **Matt. 4:5–6** → Satan uses Scripture

☞ *Correct doctrine ≠ transformed heart*

IV. Truth Without Love Is Empty

- Scripture:
 - Teaches, corrects, trains
- Without love:
 - “Clanging gong”
- Reality:
 - You can have truth in your mouth and not Christ in your heart

V. Legalism vs. the Gospel

Legalism:

- Trusts self
- Rests in knowledge
- Avoids sinners
- Seeks to be right

Gospel:

- Trusts Christ
- Rests in God
- Moves toward sinners
- Seeks to love

Luke 7: Pharisee withdraws from sinners — Christ draws near to sinners

VI. The Test of True Faith: Love

- **1 John 4:7–12**

- Evidence of salvation:
 - Not being right
 - But **loving like Christ**

*Truth is the tool—kindness is how God uses it
Rom. 2:4 – Kindness leads to repentance*

VII. The Heart of Christ (Phil. 2:3–7)

- Humble
- Servant
- Others-focused

“The more a man knows Christ, the less he exalts himself.”

VIII. The Danger: Blocking People from God

- **Matt. 23:13,15**
 - Shut the kingdom
 - Make followers of rules
- **John 2:13–16**
 - Religion used to hinder access

Nothing angers Christ more than religion that keeps sinners away

IX. God’s Heart for People

- **1 Kings 8 / 2 Chron. 6** → for all nations
- **Jonah** → knew mercy, lacked compassion

A cold heart toward others = a seared conscience

X. God’s Good Gifts (vv. 3–5)

- False teaching:
 - Forbid marriage/food
- Truth:
 - **Everything God made is good**
 - Received with **thanksgiving**
 - Made holy by **Word + prayer**

Legalist: abstains to prove righteousness

Believer: receives grace and mercy with gratitude

XI. Application & Warning

Watch your heart:

- Do you find comfort in:
 - What you do/avoid?
 - Or in Christ alone?

Examine yourself (2 Cor. 13:5):

- Do I love?
- Do I reflect Christ?

The clearest sign you belong to Christ is not how right you are, but how much you resemble Him.

Closing

Galatians 6:14

“Boast only in the cross of Jesus Christ.”