

Seventeen Reasons for Fact-Based Joy: A Study In Philipians

Reason 11: The Joy of Leaving Legalism

Philippians 3:1–7

The Lord's Day Morning

January 19, 2020

The Apostle Paul grew up and entered adulthood in an environment of legalism. Legalism views the commands of God as a means to earning his love. By law-keeping, the law-keeper seeks to obligate God, the law-giver, to pardon and promote him. In seeking to manipulate God, most legalists are prone to invent man-made laws, becoming stricter than God in many ways. But in order to appear more righteous to other people, legalists must also ignore many of God's laws to accommodate their biases and deficiencies. When Paul came to know Christ, he left legalism behind and opposed it for the rest of his life.

How to Be A Legalist

1. Be _____: Trust in yourself to earn or contribute to your salvation.
2. Be _____: Focus on external conformity to the law that people can see and avoid examining the motives of your heart only God can see.
3. Be _____: Obey the commands of God you find most convenient, but neglect the commands of God that are costly to you.
4. Be _____: Raise moral standards for your opponents and lower them for your tribe (double standard).
5. Be _____: Angrily and gleefully point out the lawbreaking of other people.
6. Be _____: Cleverly draw attention to the law-keeping of yourself (virtue signaling).