

What are you carrying?

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“These rules may seem wise because they require strong devotion, pious self-denial, and severe bodily discipline. But they provide no help in conquering a person’s evil desires.” ~ **Colossians**

It’s not about a legalistic religion, but, it’s about a realistic relationship with God through Christ.

Legalism: defined by dictionary.com

- A. the doctrine that salvation is gained through good works.
- B. the judging of conduct in terms of adherence to precise laws.
(*Colossians 2:23 NLT rules don’t help you conquer anything)

Phil Johnson (book “Real Love and Real Liberty”) says that legalism is: the error of abandoning our liberty (freedom) in Christ in order to take on a yoke of legal bondage in the hope that this will earn merit or gain favor with God.

Fear: definitions (afraid and reverence)

- A. a distressing emotion aroused by impending danger, evil, pain, etc., whether the threat is real or imagined; the feeling or condition of being afraid
- B. reverential awe, especially toward God: *the fear of God*.

Proverbs 1:7 declares, “The fear of the LORD is the beginning of knowledge.”

Condemnation: to judge or pronounce to be unfit for use or service. (To beat yourself up about it)

Conviction: when the Holy Spirit makes a person aware of their sin through their conscience and God's Word. (Feeling bad for the wrong done but wanting to do better)

Condemnation always pushes you away from God while conviction brings you closer to Him.

Pastor mentioned last week that a stronghold is also a belief. If you don’t believe you can change something in your life, you’ll be stuck in that.

“Don’t copy the behavior and customs of this world, but let God transform you into a new person by changing the way you think. Then you will learn to know God’s will for you, which is good and pleasing and perfect.” ~ **Romans**

-We should not be doing the same thing the world is doing. We need to let God transform us and stop fighting Him. This is how we learn to follow Him the right way. Legalism teaches you to work for your salvation instead of working because you are saved.

Fight the good fight of faith!!!!

***1 Timothy 6:12**

“Fight the good fight for the true faith. Hold tightly to the eternal life to which God has called you, which you have declared so well before many witnesses.” ~ **1 Timothy**

I had to fight the good fight of faith. I had to learn to work for God’s glory instead of for his grace.

I realized that the more I looked into the Word, the Spirit of God began to produce the change in me. I started to look more like Jesus in my actions.

“Put on your new nature, and be renewed as you learn to know your Creator and become like him.” ~ **Colossians**

So here are some things I’ve learned from the scriptures.

1. It’s faith in Christ and Christ alone that saves us and makes us Christians.

Going to church and keeping all the rules doesn’t make you a Christian. Being around believers doesn’t make you a believer.

Don’t get me wrong, going to church is very important. Being around other believers will sharpen us, but these things cannot save us. Only Christ can.

“This includes you who were once far away from God. You were his enemies, separated from him by your evil thoughts and actions. Yet now he has reconciled you to himself through the death of Christ in his physical body. As a result, he has brought you into his own presence, and you are holy and blameless as you stand before him without a single fault. But you must continue to believe this truth and stand firmly in it. ~ **Colossians**

2. I had to learn to walk in Christ.

“And now, just as you accepted Christ Jesus as your Lord, you must continue to follow him. Let your roots grow down into him, and let your lives be built on him. Then your faith will grow strong in the truth you were taught, and you will overflow with thankfulness. Don’t let anyone capture you with empty philosophies and high-sounding nonsense that come from human thinking and from the spiritual powers of this world, rather than from Christ.” ~ **Colossians**

3. Forgiveness is not something you earn. It's something he did for us.

“You were dead because of your sins and because your sinful nature was not yet cut away. Then God made you alive with Christ, for he forgave all our sins. He canceled the record of the charges against us and took it away by nailing it to the cross.” ~ **Colossians**

He nailed it to the cross. All our sins nailed to the cross. All our struggles, our confusion, our sickness, everything nailed to the cross. We don't have to carry them anymore.

As we read at the beginning, Rules don't help you conquer anything. Jesus helped me overcome in order to bring Him glory.

4. I had to change my way of thinking.

“Since you have been raised to new life with Christ, set your sights on the realities of heaven, where Christ sits in the place of honor at God's right hand. Think about the things of heaven, not the things of earth. For you died to this life, and your real life is hidden with Christ in God. And when Christ, who is your life, is revealed to the whole world, you will share in all his glory. So put to death the sinful, earthly things lurking within you. Have nothing to do with sexual immorality, impurity, lust, and evil desires. Don't be greedy, for a greedy person is an idolater, worshiping the things of this world.” ~ **Colossians**

Set your mind on things above. The gospel changed my heart and my affections. I didn't want the same thing. I wanted more of God. When I kept my eyes on Him instead of my problems, I noticed those things didn't affect me anymore.

Things changed when I understood my relationship with Him. We are not under the power of sin anymore!