

# The Bulletin

## Meeks St. Church of Christ

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### **“Legalism: The Un-sin”**

by Steve Klein

Since the church began, the devil has concocted any number of diabolical schemes to ensnare God's people. One of his most successful gambits has been the invention of the pseudo-sin commonly called legalism. More people consider legalism to be a sin than consider 7-UP to be a cola, but they are all mistaken. Legalism is the UN-SIN.

Legalism is defined as "strict, literal or excessive conformity to the law or to a religious or moral code" (Webster's Dictionary). Simply put, a legalist follows the rules.

I was not there when the devil and his angels dreamed up this strategy for getting Christians to commit more sin by convincing them that legalism is a sin. But I must say that it was a stroke of genius. Just think of it -- being able to actually convince people that not committing sin is a sin!

Satan must have noticed that early disciples "continued steadfastly in the apostles doctrine" (Acts 2:42), and that they were expected to be "obedient in all things" (II Corinthians 2:9). At some point however, Satan also became aware that the apostles and prophets of Christ were teaching Jewish Christians that they could not rely on their obedience to the Law of Moses for their salvation; it would do them no good to strictly follow the Law of Moses. And that's when Satan hatched his scheme. He knew that if he could convince Christians that the apostolic warnings against becoming "*entangled again with a yoke of bondage*" (Galatians 5:1) were talking about strictly keeping the commands of Jesus, then he could get them to stop being concerned with commandment keeping.

This is what has happened. Millions of people today who call themselves Christians believe that strict obedience to God is a sin called legalism. They believe that to be a faithful Christian one must not be too concerned with actually doing exactly what Jesus said to do. Their leaders write things like the following: "Stringently striving to obey Christian rules and regulations doesn't enable the Spirit-filled walk; it often kills it (II Corinthians 3:6)." [Neil Anderson, Freed from Legalism].

Please note that in the verse cited by this anti-legalist, the apostle Paul states that God "made us sufficient as ministers of the new covenant, not of the letter but of the Spirit; for the letter kills, but the Spirit gives life." What is "the letter" in this passage? Is it "Christian rules and regulations" as Mr. Anderson states?

We don't have to guess, for Paul tells us in the next verse. The letter that kills is called "the ministry of death, written and engraved on stones" (II Corinthians 3:7). "The letter" is plainly the Law of Moses! It was written on tablets of stone.

Over and over again the apostles of Christ warn that striving to strictly follow the Law of Moses will lead to death, not life! But nowhere do they state that strictly following the commands of Christ will do the same.

The New Testament never condemns the strict keeping of the commandments of God. It always commends it. Even the hair-splitting, herb-tithing, commandment-keeping Pharisees were not condemned for keeping God's commandments too well. They were condemned for keeping the small requirements while leaving off the big ones. Jesus told them that they should have kept both! "These you ought to have done, without leaving the others undone" (Matthew 23:23).

*My friends, those who love God will keep His commandments. "For this is the love of God, that we keep His commandments. And His commandments are not burdensome" (I John 5:3). Those who don't keep God's commandments, don't really know Him. "Now by this we know that we know Him, if we keep His commandments. He who says, "I know Him," and does not keep His commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him" (I John 2:3-4).*



## ***“It Is What It Is”***

by T. Doy Moyer

A friend of mine, wise and astute beyond his years (so he tells me), has shared his newly discovered motto with me: "It is what it is." Ok, so I have thought that a few times before, but it is one of those simple statements that forces us back to reality at times when we may feel overcome by our circumstances and disappointments of life. When things aren't exactly as you would desire them to be, you can become focused on reality by telling yourself, "It is what it is."

Circumstances are what they are. There are some things we can change, and some things we can't (we are getting more profound as we go). Our problem is that we often expend more worry and energy on the things we can't change; and this, in turn, can become a stumbling block to our spiritual growth and joy. "And who of you by being worried can add a single hour to his life?" (Matthew 6:27). Paul's own circumstances were often less than ideal, and beyond his control, yet his attitude remained stable: "I have learned to be content in whatever circumstance I am. I know how to get along with humble means, and I also know how to live in prosperity; in any and every circumstance I have learned the secret of being filled and going hungry, both of having abundance and suffering need. I can do all things through Him who strengthens me" (Philippians 4:13). If I may venture a loose paraphrase: It is what it is, I have learned to deal with "it" through God's help.

"Moses My servant is dead." So spoke the Lord to Joshua in (Joshua 1:2). Joshua knew this already; they had been mourning for days. But sometimes we need a reminder of the simple truth about reality. Essentially, God was telling Joshua, "Moses is gone, and you can't change that now or have him back. Now it's time to get up and go take the land of promise." In other words, "it is what it is, and you have to work with "it" the way it is."

The only option is not to accept reality. People do sometimes go through phases of "denial." They do not feel mentally able to accept what "is." It hurts too much perhaps. But if we will ever "arise and cross over this Jordan" in our lives, we must learn to accept the facts and circumstances of life as they are. It takes courage. It takes resolve. But, it must be done.

"Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your request be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all comprehension, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus" (Philippians 4:6, 7). God gives us the tools to be able to deal with all of our circumstances, including the painful ones. He wants us to cast our cares on Him, pray about them, and then let Him grant us peace in our hearts.

The solution to problems is not denial. We should learn to admit reality, then work with it as it is. When there are matters we can change for the better, let's work to change them. When the circumstances don't meet our concept of ideal, and we can't change them, let's learn to accept them and resolve to move forward with the strength God supplies. In all matters, we must "seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness" (Matthew 6: 33). Because, as another one of my favorite "profound" questions reminds us, a hundred years from now, what will "it" matter? We worry about things that will pass into oblivion, and sometimes ignore those matters that have eternal consequences. A hundred years from now, it won't matter that my car has a few scratches on it, or my water heater went out. What will matter is whether or not I have devoted myself to God and His Will. It is what it is.

(via The Jackson Drive Reporter, Jan. 10, 2010)

## ***“The Laws Of Sowing and Reaping”***

The Bible speaks so much about the matter of sowing and reaping. There are many spiritual applications to sowing seed and the harvest that comes afterward:

- (1) The Feast of Ingathering (**Exodus 23:16**).
- (2) Some of the sacrifices involved grain (**Leviticus 2**).
- (3) The Parables of Jesus (**Matthew 13:2-23; 13:24-30; Matthew 20:1-16**)
- (4) Jesus' words in **John 4:35-38**.

Lesson Text: **Galatians 6:7-9.**

### ***I. We Reap What We Sow.***

- **Romans 2:5-9; Romans 8:5-6; 12-14;**
- **Galatians 5:19-21; 22-25.**
- **Proverbs 22:8; Proverbs 11:18.**

### ***II. We Reap Later Than We Sow.***

- For sowing to the flesh:  
**Genesis 6:5-6; 1 Peter 3:20; Genesis 15:16; Luke 13:6-9.**
- For sowing to the spirit:  
– **Psalm 126:5; 1 Corinthians 3:5-9.**  
– **James 5:7-8; Galatians 6:9.**

### ***III. We Reap How We Sow.***

- **Luke 6:38; 2 Corinthians 9:6.**
- **Matthew 6:19-21; Luke 12:33; 1 Timothy 6:18-19.**

### ***IV. We Reap More Than We Sow.***

- **Matthew 13:8. Hosea 8:7.**
- **Matthew 7:13-14; Revelation 21:6-8.**

(Handout For this Sunday's Sermon)



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## And Our Facebook Page.

For sermon videos, articles, and announcements.

**News and Notes:** Sick and recovering: Tim Harris Sr, Tim Harris Jr, Chad Harris, Martha Norvell (Mississippi Care), June Lawson (Lisa Busby's Mom), Debbie Keplinger, Janis Johnson, Daniel Holloway, Tammy Kilgore (Jerry's niece), Betty Hurst, Peggy Harville (cancer), Clois Wright, and Dan & Linda Hunt, Mollie Harris, David Taylor,, Danny Cottrell, Gary Doles, Joe Felks, Randy Beaty, Sam Johnson, and Fred's grandson Mason, and Sherry Doles.

### **Those Who Serve:**

<b>Announcements:</b>	Fred Johnson
<b>Opening Prayer &amp; Scripture Reading:</b>	Doug George <i>Galatians 6:7-9</i>
<b>Song Leader:</b>	Dan Cottrell
<b>Lord's Supper:</b>	Jerry Kennemur
<b>Preaching:</b>	Brian Meade
<b>Sermon:</b>	<i>"The Laws of Sowing And Reaping"</i>
<b>Closing Prayer:</b>	Paul Busby