

LEGALISM

PART ONE: Introduction

Legalism is a word that is thrown around loosely by many today. The fact that the word is not used in the Bible calls for caution. However, there are some clear areas of scriptural disobedience or distortion which could properly be called legalism. As believers we do not have to agree that these areas are legalism. Nevertheless, we should be able to agree that they are scriptural disobedience or distortion. Moreover, we must be careful not to brand those who call for strict obedience to New Testament commands as legalists. After all, Jesus commanded us in Matthew 28:20 (NIV), "Teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you."

PART TWO: The Christian and Law

A. The Christian and the Law of Moses (The Old Covenant or Old Testament)

1. Romans 7:1-7 – In v. 6, the believer is said to be released or delivered from the _____ (=Old Testament commandments).
 - a. How does v. 7 show that the ten commandments are included in this statement? The illustration of the commandment not to _____.
 - b. Romans 14:5-6; Colossians 2:16 -Which one of the Ten Commandments is not repeated in the New Testament law of Christ.? The command requiring the observance of the _____ day.
 - c. Romans 13:8-10 – Which of the Ten Commandments are repeated in the New Testament in these verses? The prohibitions against: _____, _____, _____, _____.
 - d. Ephesians 4:15, 25 – One of the Ten Commandments prohibits bearing false witness. The New Testament covers this and more as it forbids us to _____.
 - e. Ephesians 6:1-2 – One of the Ten Commandments commands children to honor their parents. The New Testament repeats this commandment and even commands children to not only honor their parents but to _____ them.
 - f. 1 John 5:21 – The commandment to have no other gods before the true God is repeated by telling believers to _____ from idols.
 - g. Romans 1:22-23, 25 – The commandment to make no image or idol of anything in the heaven above or on the earth or in the water is repeated here by stating that people move away from God by worshipping and serving _____ rather than God.
 - h. Colossians 3:17- The command to not misuse God's name is repeated in a positive form by commanding us to do all we do or say in _____ name and in 2 Thessalonians 1:12 to _____ His name.

Note: The release or deliverance of the believer from all of the commands of the Old Testament law may be illustrated by an individual moving from China to the United States. In China there are restrictions on speaking against the government and the exercise of religious liberty. In the United States one would not find these restrictions. However, an individual would find that some of the laws in the United States would be the same. The individual would still not be allowed to steal or kidnap someone. The

LEGALISM

same is true of the Old and New Testaments. Some of the commandments of the Old Testament are repeated in the New Testament and therefore God expects us to order our behavior in keeping with those commandments. Other commandments are not repeated and, therefore, are not commandments that believers are expected to obey.

2. 2 Corinthians 3:7-11

- a. The glory of the New Covenant or New Testament remains or lasts while the glory of the Old Covenant or Old Testament _____
- b. In v. 7 the Old Covenant or Old Testament is called the ministry of death engraved on stones. According to Deuteronomy 4:13, which part of the Old Testament or Old Covenant was engraved on stones? _____

3. Hebrews 8:13 – The Old Testament or Old Covenant is said to be _____

4. Hebrews 7:12 – The law in relation to the priesthood of the New Covenant and the the priesthood of the Old Covenant is said to be _____.

5. Hebrews 7:18 – The law or Old Testament as the former commandment code is said to be _____ because of its _____ and _____.

- a. Romans 8:3 – The law (Old Testament/Covenant) was unprofitable or useless because it depended on the _____ and provided no enablement to obey it.

- b. It was unprofitable or useless because it did not:

(1) Hebrews 7:19 – make anything _____ like the New Covenant which enables us to draw _____ to God.
(=this means the New Covenant provides full fellowship).

(2) Hebrews 9:9, 14 – The old Covenant cannot make anyone _____ in regard to the conscience but the _____ of Christ to establish the new covenant _____ the conscience of the believer from _____.

6. 2 Timothy 3:16 – While all scripture is not the rule of life for the believer, it is all said to be _____ for doctrine, reproof, correction and training or instruction in _____.

- a. Romans 15:4 – The Old Testament was written for our _____ so that as we persevere or show patience, what is written in it gives us _____ so that we might have _____.

- b. 1 Corinthians 10:11 – The Old Testament events serve as _____ to us and were written for our _____.

LEGALISM

- c. Besides 9 of the 10 commandments being repeated, what are some other commands which are repeated:

Match the following commands in the Old Testament that are basically repeated in the New Testament by putting the correct references by them:

Exodus 17:3, 7 Psalm 32:11 Psalm 34:14
 Philippians 2:14 Philippians 4:4 Hebrews 12:14

New Testament reference	The command	Old Testament reference
	Seek to be at peace with all people	
	Rejoice in the Lord Himself	
	Avoid complaining	

- d. Certain Old Testament commandments clarify or help specify what is meant by New Testament commands. Write the pair of scripture references in the blanks which explains how an Old Testament commandment clarifies a New Testament commandment: Ephesians 4:28 cp. Deuteronomy 22:1-3; 1 Peter 4:15 cp. Exodus 21:22-23; Ephesians 6:4 cp. Proverbs 13:24

- (1) The discipline or training of the Lord would include spanking.

- (2) The command against stealing would include returning the lost property of others.

- (3) The command against murder also includes abortion.

Note: *Many Old Testament commands are not applicable to the believer under the New Testament Law of Christ because they are not repeated in the New Testament. Yet they teach a principle that is repeated in the New Testament.*

- (1) *Deu. 22:11 forbids wearing woolen or linen garments mixed together. People living at that time thought this gave them certain magical powers to wear this combination. The New Testament believer is forbidden to have anything to do with the occult or magic in Gal. 5:19-20 which helps us understand how this command is profitable.*
- (2) *Deu. 22:5 forbids men and women from wearing clothing of the opposite sex. There is no such command in the New Testament. However, 1 Cor. 11:14-15 shows us that Christians are to be distinctive in their appearance so that one can tell if they are male or female.*

7. Salvation and the Old Testament Law of Moses

- a. Romans 3:20 - _____ flesh or human being is _____ in God's sight by the works of the law. The law of Moses gives one the _____ of sin in one's life.
- b. Romans 3:27 - _____ is excluded by the law of _____ but by not by the law of works or observing the law.
- c. Romans 3:28 – Justification is by _____ apart from _____.
- d. Galatians 3:11-12 - _____ is justified by the law. The law is not based on faith.

LEGALISM

8. The Old Testament Law of Moses and the Spirit-led life for sanctification.

- a. Galatians 5:18 – If we are _____ by the Spirit, we are not under the _____
- b. Galatians 3:1-5 - We received our spiritual life by hearing God’s word and receiving the Holy Spirit when we placed our faith in Christ. We are made perfect or mature by – multiple choice:
 - (1) doing what the Old Testament requires of us.
 - (2) hearing God’s word and having the Holy Spirit empower our life by continuing to trust or depend on Christ.
 - (3) works alone
 - (4) a second work of grace.

Note: Requiring obedience to any Old Testament law not repeated in the New Testament is generally considered a form of legalism.

B. The Christian and the Law of Christ

1. Hebrews 1:1-2 – God spoke to the Jewish people through various prophets in the Old Testament and through His _____ in the last _____ in the New Testament.

2. John 14:26 - When Christ’s followers wrote the New Testament, the _____ helped remind them of what He said and taught during His earthly ministry.

3. John 16:12-15 – The followers of Jesus who wrote the New Testament received their information from the Holy Spirit who had taken it from _____ to disclose to His followers. According to John 16:12 Jesus had _____ things to say to His Apostles which they could not _____ while Christ was on earth, but the Holy Spirit would guide them into _____ the truth.

Note: 2 Peter 3:2 shows that Christ gave commandments through the Apostles which would include the material taught during Jesus’ earthly ministry and the material Jesus gave to the Holy Spirit to show to the Apostles and their associates after His ascension.

4. Terminology for the New Testament Law of Christ

- a. 1 Corinthians 9:20-21 cp. Galatians 6:2 – It is called the law of _____
 - b. Romans 8:2 – It is called the law of the _____ of _____ in Christ Jesus which freed us from the law of _____ and _____ which states in Romans 6:23 that the wages of _____ is _____.
 - c. Matthew 28:20 cp. 1 John 2:3-4; 2 John 1:5-6 – It is called Christ’s or His _____. Matthew 28:20 states that we are to _____ believers to obey _____ that Christ _____.
- Note: Teaching obedience to Christ’s commands is not legalism.*
- d. Acts 15:10 cp. Matthew 11:28-30 – The Old Testament law was an unbearable _____ while Christ’s law which is called His _____ is stated to be easy.
 - e. James 1:25 – The law of Christ is called the law _____ which if studied and obeyed will bring _____
 - f. Romans 8:31-32, 34 – Christ referred to the law of Christ as My _____ which if learned and obeyed will help the believer to be Christ’s _____ in the full sense and _____ the truth in way that makes him _____ from the power of sin.

LEGALISM

g. John 1:17 cp. Romans 6:14 – While the Old Testament law is called the _____, the law of Christ is called _____.

h. Hebrews 8:7-13 – The law of Christ is called the _____ Covenant and God has made us _____ of the _____ Covenant according to 2 Corinthians 3:5-6.

i. Jude 1:3 – We are told to contend for the _____ once and for all delivered to believers. Here the law of Christ is called the _____.

Some understand this to refer to the gospel only. Two examples help clear this up.

(1) 1 Timothy 4:1 states that in the latter days some will depart or fall away from the faith. In the verses that follow (vv. 2-5) we see that the issues raised as examples of departing from the faith are –multiple choice:

- (a) the conditions of salvation from sin's penalty.
- (b) the unpardonable sin and the sin unto death
- (c) forbidding believers to marry and forbidding certain foods
- (d) gossip and sexual sin

(2) Titus 1:12-13 – Being sound in the faith includes – multiple choice:

- (a) only those issues pertaining to the gospel
- (b) avoiding gluttony and lying
- (c) obeying every command in the Old Testament.
- (d) not listening to church leaders

Note: As can be seen, the term “the faith” refers to the truths of the New Testament and not just the gospel.

j. Romans 7:6 – The New Testament law of Christ is called the new way or newness of the _____ while the Old Testament law is called the oldness or old way of the _____.

5. Ephesians 2:8-9 cp. Galatians 3:21 – Obedience to the law of Christ – multiple choice:

- a. is the only way to be saved from the penalty of sin.
- b. does not save the believer from the penalty of sin because there is no law given that people could obey in order to be saved.
- c. means that we have to be saved by trusting Christ plus obeying this law.
- d. is one of many ways to be saved from the penalty of sin.

6. 1 Thessalonians 4:3 – Responsible obedience to this command of the law of Christ to abstain from sexual immorality is a necessary part of God's will for our _____.

7. Matthew 6:1-8 – Jesus' main point in this passage is – multiple choice:

- a. Our good works should not be done to glorify ourselves.
- b. Long and repetitious prayers are obedience to His command.
- c. Our good works need to be done so people will commend us for them.
- d. Good works are not important for the Christian life.

Note: Many believe violation of Jesus' main point in this passage is part of what it means to be legalistic

LEGALISM

8. Colossians 2:6 cp. Galatians 2:20 – We begin the Christian life by trusting Christ for salvation and we live the Christian life by trusting _____ for the power and guidance to obey His commands.

a. Galatians 3:1-5 – As we trust Christ for the power to live the Christian life by hearing God's word, the _____ gives us the power we need.

b. Hebrews 12:4, 14 cp. 1 Timothy 4:7 – These verses teach – multiple choice:

- (1) We are being fleshly if we exert effort to live the Christian life.
- (2) If we just trust Christ for the power of the Holy Spirit to live the Christian life, it will flow automatically and require no effort on our part.
- (3) both (1) and (2)
- (4) Living for Christ does require that we exert effort and strive against sin.

(c) Notice how our efforts or work and God's working are working together in living for Christ in the following references:

(1) Colossians 1:29 – We _____ in harmony with God's _____ which works in us mightily.

(2) Philippians 2:12-13 – We _____ out our salvation (=express our salvation in doing good) because God _____ in us to give us the will and the work or action for His good purpose.

(3) 1 Corinthians 3:9 – We are God's _____-workers.

Note: Many Bible teachers teach that one aspect of what it means to be legalistic is to depend on our own efforts or strength to live the Christian life. This does not mean that it is sinful or legalistic to exert effort to try to obey Christ and not sin. We are responsible to do so, however; we must do so in conscious dependence and trust in Christ to supply the needed power through the working of the Holy Spirit.

LEGALISM

PART THREE: Christian Liberty

A. Put the scripture references below by the statement that matches the type of liberty the scripture is talking about and keep in mind you may have to read verses before and after your reference to make an accurate answer: John 8:31-34; Romans 7:1-7; Romans 8:1-2; Romans 8:19-23; 1 Corinthians 7:20-21; 1 Corinthians 8:9; 1 Peter 2:16

- _____ 1. Freedom from the penalty of sin
- _____ 2. Social freedom
- _____ 3. Freedom to participate in behavior not forbidden nor commanded by scripture
- _____ 4. Freedom from the power of sin
- _____ 5. political freedom
- _____ 6. Freedom from the presence of sin and the bondage to decay
- _____ 7. Freedom from the Old Testament or Old Covenant Law

Note: Much confusion, error and misapplication of scripture has occurred because people have not rightly determined which type of liberty is in view in the passage they are teaching or studying. The Old Testament law was discussed in Part Two so will be given only passing clarification below. The freedoms from the penalty, power and presence of sin are discussed in the Basic Discipleship course and do not bear that much on the question of legalism. The freedom to participate in behavior not forbidden nor commanded by scripture is clarified because this is where there has been much legalistic teaching.

B. Political Freedom

1. Acts 22:23-29 – Paul used his freedom and rights as a Roman citizen to avoid being _____.

2. Acts 25:9-12 – Paul used his freedom and his rights as a Roman citizen to appeal to _____ to avoid being handed over to the Jewish authorities for what would have been a procedure that would have probably resulted in death not to mention needless suffering.

3. 1 Peter 2:16 – We are never to use our liberty as a cover-up for doing what is _____ but to use it to live as _____ of God.

Note: Keep in mind that every government allows a measure of freedom. Even China or Islamic countries, who are very restrictive, allow a measure of freedom. Even in the United States or Western Europe, freedom is not unlimited. There are still boundaries.

LEGALISM

C. Clarification on other freedoms

1. Galatians 5:13 - Believers are not to use their freedom from the Old Testament law as an opportunity to indulge the _____ but are by love to _____ one another.

2. 1 Corinthians 7:20-21 – If an individual who was a slave had the opportunity to be freed from that status, he or she was – multiple choice:

- a. not to accept it
- b. to worry about it
- c. to accept it and be free
- d. both a and b

Note: The application to believers today is to remember that since we are free to quit our jobs, we should accept that freedom once we have fulfilled any written or verbal agreement.

D. Freedom in the uncommanded, unforbidden areas of the Christian life

1. Some definitions:

- a. strong believer – One whose conscience and convictions are less restrictive in the uncommanded and unforbidden areas of the Christian life.
- b. weak believer - One whose conscience and convictions are more restrictive in the uncommanded and unforbidden areas of the Christian life.

Note: The terms “strong” and “weak” have nothing to do with spiritual maturity(1 Corinthians 8:8). They simply distinguish those whose consciences and convictions are more restrictive from those whose consciences and convictions are less restrictive. Our goal is not to make the weak believer into a strong believer nor is it to make the strong believer into a weak believer. Our goal is to help both become more Christlike and to give direction on how they can function together in a harmonious way.

LEGALISM

2. Principles that govern conduct of all believers in the uncommanded and unforbidden areas of the Christian life. Put the letter belonging to the scripture reference(s) by it in the blank in front of the statement to which it belongs:

- a. 1 Corinthians 6:12 b. 1 Corinthians 10:31
c. Romans 14:4, 10-12 d. Romans 14:17-19
e. Romans 14:14, 22-23 f. Romans 14:13, 21; 1 Corinthians 8:9

_____ No believer – weak or strong - is to do anything in these uncommanded, unforbidden behaviors that would violate the personal convictions of his own conscience. These are areas where a believer is convinced that a certain behavior - although not forbidden by scripture – is something that he should not participate in.

_____ Avoid causing another believer to violate his more restrictive convictions in any uncommanded or unforbidden area of the Christian life, and avoid causing him to go beyond what you did and disobey the teaching of God’s word?

_____ Choose behaviors in these uncommanded or unforbidden areas that will promote love, peace, joy and Christlikeness in the life of other believers and my own life.

_____ Avoid behaviors that are enslaving or addicting and avoid behaviors that do not spiritually benefit others or yourself.

_____ Choose the behavior which will glorify God. This means to choose what would best display God’s complete goodness.

_____ Even though you are not accountable to other believers for decisions on these matters not commanded nor forbidden by God’s word, choose well because you will appear before God’s judgment seat to be judged by Christ for your decisions.

Note: With reference to behavior choices on things not commanded nor forbidden by scripture, how believers apply these principles to their lives will be different because of upbringing, life experiences and struggles, culture and teaching. Therefore, these are never proper subjects for the church discipline and restoration process in Matthew 18:15-17.

E. False Freedom

1. 2 Peter 2:18-19 – False teachers promise _____ outside the boundaries of God’s word by appealing to the _____, but they themselves are _____ of corruption or depravity.

2. John 8:34 – If we try to go for liberty outside the boundaries of God’s word, we have sinned and make ourselves a _____ of sin.

Note: Like a train, we operate best when we run on the track and not off of the track.

LEGALISM

PART FOUR: Judging Others

A. Matthew 7:1-5

1. 7:1-2 – What are two cautions regarding judging a brother (=fellow-believer)?
 - a. The way we judge other believers will be the way that God _____ us.
Note: Matthew 6:14-15 would be a good example of this.
 - b. The standard or measure by which we judge others will be the _____ by which God judges us.
2. 7:3-5 – To judge a brother (=fellow-believer), we must deal first with the more obvious error or sin in _____ life, then we can help a brother deal with the less obvious error or sin in _____ life.

B. John 7:24

1. Judgment of others is never to be based on human viewpoint norms which measure the _____ .
2. Judgment of others is to be a _____ judgment based on the unchanging reality of God's word.

C. Romans 14:1-6, 10, 13

1. With regard to differences over issues not forbidden nor commanded by scripture – multiple choice:
 - a. The weaker (i.e. more restrictive) believer is not to judge the stronger (i.e. less restrictive believer).
 - b. The stronger (i.e. less restrictive believer) is not show or express contempt for the weaker (i.e. more restrictive) believer.
 - c. Both a and b
 - d. Believers are to judge one another based on their personal convictions concerning these issues.
2. Romans 14:1; 15:7 – The solution to differences over issues not forbidden nor commanded by scripture is for believers to _____ one another.

LEGALISM

D. 1 Corinthians 4:5

1. This forbids the judging of – multiple choice:
 - a. the motives of the heart
 - b. actions
 - c. words
 - d. both b and c.
2. 2 Chronicles 6:19, 30 – The thoughts of our heart are known are known by – multiple choice:
 - a. spiritually minded people
 - b. people trained in psychology
 - c. Satan
 - d. God's angels
 - e. only God
3. Matthew 12:34-35 – People's _____ reflects what is in their heart or thought life.

E. James 4:11-12

1. This forbids speaking against – multiple choice:
 - a. the sin of a fellow-believer
 - b. a fellow believer
 - c. the law or word of God
 - d. both b and c.
2. *Note: This emphasizes the sin of using personal standards to judge fellow-believers instead of the standards of God's word.*

F. 1 Corinthians 5:12-13

1. We are not to judge those who are _____ the church when they commit open sin.
2. We are to judge those who are _____ the church when they commit open sin.

Note: Good examples of some of the open sins would be found in 1 Corinthians 5:9-11. This presupposes the process of Matthew 18:15-17 and Galatians 6:1 has been followed.

LEGALISM

PART FIVE: Self-glorification and self-promotion

A. Matthew 23:5 – Doing good deeds for _____
recognition rather than for God’s glory.

1. Matthew 6:1-4 – Helping those in need for self-glorification and self-promotion is done to be _____ by people. To avoid this, helping those in need is to be done _____ so that only God _____.
2. Matthew 6:5-8 – Praying for the purpose of self-glorification and self-promotion is done to be _____ by people. To avoid this, most of our prayer is to be done in our own _____ in private so that only God _____.
3. Matthew 6:16-18 – Fasting for self-glorification and self-promotion is done to be _____ by people. To avoid this, fasting is to be done in a _____ manner.

B. John 5:44 – Seeking honor or praise from _____
rather than from _____

1. Matthew 23:6 – Seeking places of _____ at public and social events.
2. 2 Corinthians 5:12 – Rejoicing or taking pride in how one _____ rather than what is in the heart.
3. 2 Corinthians 10:12 - _____ ourselves with other believers.
4. 2 Corinthians 10:18 - _____ ourselves instead of seeking God’s _____
5. Proverbs 25:27 – Seeking ways to _____ rather than glorifying God.
6. Proverbs 27:2 – We need to let others _____ us and not to _____ ourselves.

Note: The practices identified in parts A and B of this section are part of what it means to be legalistic.

LEGALISM

C. Avoiding the appearance of sin, match the following scriptures with the statements below: Acts 24:16; 2 Corinthians 8:21; Titus 2:3-5; Titus 2:6-8; Titus 2:9-10

- _____ 1. We are to live exemplary lives so that those who oppose Christianity do not have reason to malign us.
- _____ 2. Maintain a conscience which is blameless in both our heart attitude and actions in how they appear to God and in how they appear to people.
- _____ 3. Christian workers need to be good, honest and subordinate employees to make the word of God and its teaching attractive.
- _____ 4. Our behavior needs to be honorable in the sight of God. This includes both right actions and right motives. However, our behavior needs to be right in the sight of people for the sake of a positive testimony for Christ.
- _____ 5. Wives are to conduct themselves so that God's word will not be dishonored.

Note: Externalism is concerned only with the outward act and appearance. Obeying Christ's law is concerned with heart motives, actions and also how it appears to people. When we speak of actions appearing to be right, we mean appearing to be obedient to Scriptural norms. In such cases, if people think we are wrong, malign us or worse, then it becomes persecution because of righteousness (Matthew 5:10).

LEGALISM

PART SIX: Traditions and man-made commandments

A. Tradition which goes against God's word is condemned.

When tradition is used to cancel scripture,
the following are true:

Matthew 15:3-9; Mark 7:6-13

1. Matthew 15:8 – People caught up in tradition and man-made commandments are near God with their _____ but are far from God with their _____,
2. Matthew 15:9 - Their _____ is empty or vain because they teach as doctrines the _____ of men.
3. Mark 7:8 – Neglecting or laying aside the _____ of God, they hold to the _____ of men.
4. Mark 7:9 – Tradition is a problem when it rejects or sets aside the _____ of God.

B. Man-made traditions and commandments

Colossians 2:8, 20-23

Note: This speaks of man-made commandments which are put on an equal basis with God's word in the New Testament law of Christ.

1. The passage above is **not** talking about the following types of man-made commandments. Match the scripture references with the type of man-made commands they discuss which God expects us to obey: Romans 13:1-2; Ephesians 5:22-23; Ephesians 6:1-4; Hebrews 13:7, 17:
_____ a. obedience to church leaders
_____ b. obedience of wife to her husband
_____ c. obedience to government officials
_____ d. obedience of child to parents
2. Acts 5:29 – With reference to man-made commandments mentioned in #1, God expects us to obey – multiple choice:
a. everything they command no matter what.
b. only what we feel we should obey.
c. anything they command unless they command us to do something that would cause us to disobey any command of God's word.
d. none of those commands.

LEGALISM

3. Colossians 2:8 – These commands are based on human _____ and _____ along with _____ deception according to the basic principles of the _____ which are listed in 1 John 2:16 as follows:
- pleasure – the lust or cravings of _____
 - possessions – the lust of the _____
 - prominence – the _____ of life.

4. Colossians 2:20-23 – These commands are supposedly to please God and are in addition to scripture:
- They have an _____ of wisdom.
 - self-imposed or self-made _____
 - false _____ or self-abasement
 - neglect or severe treatment of the _____
 - they are of no value against _____

Note: Examples of man-made rules for the spiritual life are: lists of do's and don't's not specified in God's word.

5. Deuteronomy 4:2 – We are not to _____ to God's word nor to _____ from God's word. The purpose of this command is to facilitate (=make easier) _____ of God's commands in His word.

C. Biblical traditions – These are recorded in the New Testament and were traditions before they became part of scripture. Match by putting the following scriptures with the statement to which they belong: 1 Corinthians 11:2-16; 2 Thessalonians 2:15; 2 Thessalonians 3:6

- _____ 1. Believers are not to lead an undisciplined life.
- _____ 2. Men and women are to be distinctive in appearance and women are to demonstrate proper submission to God's order in the church.
- _____ 3. These believers were commanded to obey these traditions whether written in this letter or told elsewhere.

Note: While traditions were written in the letters to the churches. Some were given orally to the churches. These traditions served as their New Testament until it was completed. Christ had promised that the Holy Spirit would guide the Apostles and their associates into all the truth (John 16:12-15).

LEGALISM

PART SEVEN: Distortion of God's Word

A. Some commands are more important than others

1. Matthew 23:23

a. The scribes and Pharisees had neglected the _____ matters of the law or word of God.

- b. Obedience to the less important matters of God's word
- (1) could be omitted as far as Jesus was concerned.
 - (2) is hypocrisy
 - (3) is something Christ expects believers to do
 - (4) is optional

2. Matthew 23:23 cp. Luke 11:42

a. What are the examples of more important aspects of God's word?

_____, _____,
_____ and _____

b. The examples of obedience to a minor commandment was giving _____ of the harvest of even small plants in our property.

Note: Notice that Jesus was not saying that it is okay to disregard minor commandments. Rather, Jesus was saying that we need to emphasize teaching and obedience to the more important commandments of God's word while still teaching and obeying minor commandments. A good modern day example of this would be the question: Are Christians better known for their stance against abortion or for their love for one another?

B. An example of deciding which commands are more important (Matthew 12:1-8)

1. 12:1 – On the Sabbath day, the disciples of Jesus were – multiple choice:

- a. were picking grain so they could sell it
- b. were picking grain so they could have it to eat later
- c. were picking grain so they could eat it to satisfy their hunger
- d. were stealing the grain by eating it

LEGALISM

2. 12:2

- a. The Pharisee's stated that this was not lawful on the _____ because it violated their traditions which were considered more important than what the law in scripture actually taught.
- b. cp. Exodus 20:8-11 – The command for observing the Sabbath as a day of rest from doing any kind of _____ for all the people, their families, servants and anyone living among them under the penalty of _____ (cp. Exodus 31:14-15).
- c. cp. Deuteronomy 23:24-25 – The law stated that if you ate grapes or grain in your neighbor's field – multiple choice:
 - (1) that you could eat until you were satisfied, and you could take as much as you wanted with you.
 - (2) that you could eat until you were satisfied, but you could not take away any food with you.
 - (3) that it was the same as stealing and would require restitution.
 - (4) that it was the same as stealing and would require the death penalty.
- d. cp. Exodus 16:22-25 – On the Sabbath day the people of Israel were allowed to – multiple choice:
 - (1) gather food
 - (2) prepare food
 - (3) eat food
 - (4) none of the above

Note: If the disciples had carried off extra grain, they would have been guilty of working on the Sabbath and in violation of God's command.

3. 12:3-4 – David and his companions being given the _____ which was not lawful for him to eat but was lawful only for the _____ to eat.
4. 12:5 – Jesus gave examples that the law made provisions for exceptions to its provisions in allowing the _____ in the temple to break the law of the Sabbath and yet are _____.
 - a. cp. Numbers 28:9-10 – The priests worked on the Sabbath by presenting _____.
 - b. cp. 1 Chronicles 9:31-32 – The Levites prepared the _____ every Sabbath.
5. 12:7 – When two commands clash such as Exodus 20:8-11; 31:14-15 and Deuteronomy 23:24-25 clashed, Jesus said that God's word in Hosea 6:6 showed that God preferred _____ rather than sacrifice and judgment and in Mark 2:27 Jesus also stated that the man was not made for the benefit of the _____ but was made for the benefit of _____.

LEGALISM

Note: The commands in Exodus taught that no work was to be done. So the question was: Is gathering food to eat on the spot and not the future a form of work and therefore a restriction on the provision to go into a neighbor's field and pick food and eat it on the spot? Or is the question: Is gathering food to eat on the spot in a neighbor's field not really work and therefore not a violation of the Sabbath? Jesus taught that when such commands conflict, we should go with the understanding that mirrors mercy and compassion rather than sacrifice and condemnation.

6. 12:6, 8 - Jesus stated His authority in the situation:
 - a. 12:6 – Christ and His kingdom are greater than the _____ which issued the rabbinical interpretations based on tradition rather than scripture.
 - b. 12:8 – Christ is _____ over the Sabbath and therefore this interpretation has authority.

LEGALISM

PART EIGHT: Obedient Motives

A. Scriptural motives for obeying commands and avoiding sin

#	Scripture Reference	Action or thought	Motive
1.	Ephesians 4:26-27	Don't harbor anger or let anger lead you into sin	To prevent _____ from getting a foothold
2.	Ephesians 4:28	Don't steal and work at a job	_____ with those in need.
3.	Ephesians 4:29	Avoid destructive words and speak to edify or build up	To give _____ to those who hear
4.	Ephesians 6:8	Wholehearted service to boss	_____ a reward from the Lord
5.	1 Corinthians 6:18-20	Flee sexual immorality and glorify God in your body	Our body is the _____ of the Holy Spirit, we have been _____ with a price.
6.	Colossians 3:12	Practice compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness, patience	God's _____ of us and His _____ for us and the fact that we are _____ (=set apart by Him for His purpose)

B. General motive for obeying God's word

1. James 1:25 – Being _____ in what we do.

2. Luke 11:28 – If we hear and obey God's word, we are promised _____

Note: Some Christians state that love for God and for Christ are the only acceptable motive for obeying and serving Him and that any other motive is somehow inferior. This is misleading. If you are serving God for the reasons that He gives you in His word, then you are doing it for love. Review John 14:15, 21, 1 John 5:2-3; 2 John 1:5-6. In summary obedience to God includes our actions and thoughts as well as our motives. Love is like a pie and the specific commands and motivations are pieces of that pie. One cannot love without obeying God's word in action, thought and motive. One cannot obey in action, thought and motive without loving. John 14:15, 21 shows how love and obedience are interchangeable.

LEGALISM

PART NINE: A summary of legalism

A. Legalism may include any or all of these characteristics:

1. Making obedience to the Old Testament, to tradition, and/or to man-made commands (other than those given by people whom God has placed in authority over us) necessary for spirituality or for salvation.
2. Trying to push on others your view on matters not specifically commanded nor specifically forbidden by scripture or downgrading other believers for disagreeing with you on such matters.
3. Obeying any law or command including Christ's law
 - a. for the purpose of glorifying self,
 - b. without depending on Christ for the power to obey or
 - c. with wrong motives
4. Emphasizing lesser matters of obedience to the exclusion of more important matters.
5. Making obedience to Christ's law a requirement in order to be saved.

B. Legalism is **NOT**:

1. Conforming to Old Testament commands, to traditions, and/or man-made commands (other than those made by people whom God has placed in authority over us) so long as we do not do so to be more spiritual or do so for salvation.
2. Having a more restrictive view than other Christians on issues not commanded nor forbidden by scripture so long as we do not:
 - a. try to force that view on them or
 - b. downgrade other believers with less restrictive views.
3. Being concerned that Christian obedience not only is right but also being concerned that it looks right.
4. Holding oneself or other believers accountable in small matters so long as we do so in larger matters.
5. Teaching that people who have genuinely trusted Christ will evidence this faith by obeying Christ's law more often than not.
6. Teaching that obedience to Christ's law – even in the smallest matters – is a test for spirituality.