

The Essentials of Christian Idolatry

#3: The Idolatry of Legalism

Galatians 5:1

Pastor Kurt

Christ set us free from the guilt of the law so we would have freedom with God (Gal 5:1a).

Primary Point: Obeying rules because of guilt makes both you and God miserable.

Legalism is salvation by works (Gal 2:16; 1:6-7; Acts 15:1)

Legalism is following human traditions (Gal 4:8-10; 2:11-14)

Today, this kind of legalism may include restrictions on certain types of clothing, Christian music, dancing, or Bible translations.

Legalists measure spiritual maturity by how well people are following their rules. Your Dad measures it by how consistently you experience and exhibit *“the effects of the Holy Spirit”*.

Legalism is obeying your Dad out of guilt

What makes it legalism is the motive and reason people are obeying those biblical commands.

Biblical Christians obey their Dad out of gratitude. Legalistic ones obey out of guilt. (Rom 8:1)

In fact if you do not feel joy in doing something for God, you are not really doing it for God, but for some other reason. (1 Cor 13:3-4)

Your obedience to Him is a measure of how much you know His love and love Him. But it is never a measure of how much He loves you.

Your guilt never pleases Him. Even if it motivates you to obey His commands.

Legalism kills the joy that is supposed to come with serving your Dad and others. (John 15:10-11; 2 Cor 9:7; Matt 11:28-30)

Legalism is another form of idolatry

L.I.F.E. Group ?’s

- What was especially meaningful to you in this message?
- How would you define legalism? Do you have any personal experiences with legalism?
- What are the different types of legalism and examples of them?
- How can you tell if legalism is affecting you?
- What is the motivation of legalism?
- Why is legalism another form of idolatry?
- How can you be free from legalism?