

RELATION OF GRACE TO LEGALISM

Intro. Bolton changing churches bec one too legalistic. legalism not a biblical term and not usually defined. Popularly means presence of (strict) law and requirement to obey it. Dict: strict, excessive conformity to a (religious) law or code. Close but incomplete.

1. Legalism is not same as presence of law. Always laws. Eden, Abr, Mosaic, X, Mill. Sets of law exist regardless of person's relationship to any one of them.

{Some say, imposing law on others. Then God a legalist. Ch leaders legalists, self-discipline may be legalistic. Imposing laws can be OK, so not nec legalism.}

2. Legalism not imposing law on others. If so, God is a legalist, church leaders are too (Heb. 13:17); and self-discipline may be also (1 Cor 9:27).

3. Legalism taps the wrong power source. Self. For sal and for sanct-flesh (Gal 3:3; 5:16; Rom 7). Correct power source is HS. Not using may result in legalistic living but not same.

4. Legalism involves wrong motive. Under law, Ex 19:5-6--keep covenant and be special people. Or Obey and be blessed. Under grace--you have been blessed, now live like it (Eph 1:3; 4:1; Rom 12:1; Eph 5:8-You are light in the Lord; walk as children of light). List all the blessings.

5. Legalist conforms to a code. Code is what is involved; power is how, motive is why conform. Legalist is not a non-conformist. May be a conformist for wrong self-exalting motive and using power of self. Results may be similar but such is a counterfeit of biblical living. Definition: legalism is flesh-promoted conformity to God's law in order to glorify self. Glory means show off. Opposite is conforming in order to glorify God. Legalism is not having to do something vs. wanting to. Have to grade papers in order to be a good teacher whether I want to or not. *Athlete Training rules to win*

6. Testing the definition.

On Israelite. Many conformed out of love, Ps 1:2. Legalist Isa 1:11-15.

Under grace. Commands. Bear burdens, Gal 6:2. Motive I want to do what I have to do. Prayer list can be helpful or legalistic.

Principles. 1 Cor. 8:13.

Guidelines of leaders. Heb. 7:17. Obey with right attitude even if disagree.

7. What is Liberty?

Opposite is not legalism but slavery. It's the position into which a believer has been brought in X. Aspects: (1) Being free to be justified in X and not by the law, Rom 3:20.

(2) Freedom to be a slave of rtness, Rom 6:18.

(3) Future position in glory, Rom 8:21.

Restrictions on liberty. If unrestricted then it is license. If wrongly motivated legalism.

If correctly restricted by love then it is service, Gal 5:13. With weaker brother can curb our activities but wrong attitude³ (despising weaker, Rom 14:3a). See also 1 Cor 9:19-22).

*have to be holy, not come, good Rom 7:12
or joy of heart, Ps 14:8, delight 119:47, bliss 32:1 crowning of grace 103:4 refreshing 198*