

DOCTRINE OF LEGALISM

- I. Introduction and definition.
 - A. Legalism is the ethical theory that states that moral qualities of right and wrong are determined by legal rules, which are applicable at all times, in all places, and in all circumstances.
 - B. When a person follows those rules, that person is judged as **good**; when a person ignores the rules, that person is judged as **bad**.
 - C. Webster defines legalism as the strict observance of a legal code as a means of justification, or more correctly, self-justification.
 - D. For our purposes, legalism is accurately defined as the addition of restrictions, prohibitions, or commandments, which come from the source of men and not the Word of God, that are given equal or greater authority than the Scripture.
 - 1. The Bible makes it clear that it stands as the only God-breathed record of God's plan, that it is perfect, and completely sufficient to provide man all that is necessary to orient to God. II Tim. 3:15-17
 - 2. When one adds to or takes away from that perfect Word, it is tantamount to usurping God's authority, which God will not tolerate. Rev. 22:18-19
 - 3. God instructed the Jews to deviate neither to the right or left of His Word. Deut. 5:32, 17:11,20
 - 4. To deviate to the right is equivalent to adding to the Word of God (legalism), while deviation to the left is synonymous with omitting His words (liberalism).
 - E. In the context of Bible doctrine, Ph₁ legalism is the fallacious assumption that man can be saved by obeying the rules found throughout the Bible.
 - 1. The Word of God clearly teaches that men cannot obtain a relationship with God by any system of human works; it makes no difference what law is in view. Gal. 2:16
 - 2. Righteousness does not come from external adherence to laws, not even the laws that God Himself established. Gal. 3:21
 - 3. Ph₁ righteousness comes by faith in the gospel; God imputes His righteousness to the one that believes in His Son. Rom. 4:5
 - F. In a Ph₂ sense, legalism is the doctrine that states that believers are kept oriented to God by virtue of external observances, rather than by virtue of orientation to His plan in the inner man.
 - G. Two distinct forms of legalism exist today.
 - 1. The first is the form of legalism that places believers in the Church Age under the ceremonial code of the Mosaic Law.
 - 2. This was the prime tenet of the Judaizers in the early part of the Church Age; they taught that salvation and spirituality was achieved by overt compliance with various external rituals/works like circumcision, observance of holidays, avoiding certain foods, etc. Acts 15:1,5
 - 3. The second form of legalism that exists is more subtle and insidious, but still focuses on achieving spirituality by compliance with an external set of rules.

- a. This approach suggests that one be viewed as **righteous** if he is in compliance with the rules.
 - b. Unfortunately, these rules are not found in the Word of God, but are the invention of someone that has determined that he knows more than the Word of God.
 - c. In some cases, they are simply the result of taking a true doctrine to an extreme that is not envisioned in the Word of God.
 - 1.) An example of this is found in the legalism of the Pharisees that took the doctrine of separation to an extreme not envisioned by the Word of God. Matt. 9:10-13
 - 2.) Their legalistic approach toward separation eliminated the intended impact of the witness of the life towards potential positive volition.
- H. Clearly, all forms of legalism are antithetical to the system of grace, which is the title and policy of God's plan.
- 1. Grace is the means by which all believers are saved (Eph. 2:8-9), and it is the means by which believers maintain spirituality and continue their spiritual advance. Gal. 3:1-5
 - 2. A believer is either walking by faith in God's Word, abiding in Christ (Jn. 15:4), or has sinned, is out of fellowship, and must use the grace system of recovery. IJn. 1:9
- I. It is the responsibility of all communicators of God's Word to teach the **whole purpose of God** by avoiding any tendency to teach something that is not substantiated by the Bible, or by omitting any portion of the Scripture. Acts 20:20-21,27
- 1. Teaching verse by verse, maintaining the contextual flow, and avoiding digressions is a protection for the pastor-teacher, and ensures that the perfect balance of the Word of God is kept intact. IITim. 4:2
 - 2. Believers are then exhorted and edified by the objective standard of the Scripture and not by the subjective standard of the personal preferences of the pastor-teacher.
 - 3. This approach allows the Word of God to work in those that are positive without infringing on the right of the individual sheep to work out his/her own salvation. Phil. 2:12

II. Legalism is man-made religion.

- A. Any attempt to add conditions to the Word of God is a denial of true Christianity, which promotes obtaining and maintaining a relationship with God based on His method of faith and grace.
- B. Legalism seeks to incorporate man's terms and conditions into the equation and coerce God and others to accept them.
- C. The Jews are a perfect example of people that were initially liberal (straying to the left) and overreacted by becoming extremely legalistic (straying to the right).
- D. The dispersions that occurred in 721 BC and 586 BC were the direct result of their liberal approach to God's plan, dismissing the clear commands about separation from the nations around them. Ex. 34:15; Josh. 23:12
- E. This led to their embrace of the religions of the heathen around them, participation in the phallic cult, and their rejection of the moral aspects of the law; these violations brought the wrath of God on the nation. Jere. 16:10-13
- F. The Jews recognized that their dispersion was a judgment of God for their violation of the Mosaic Law, so they developed a series of man-made injunctions to avoid God's judgment in the future.

- G. However, by the time of Christ, this system of legalism was promoted as a means of establishing a relationship with God and keeping it.
- H. Therefore, they no longer looked to Messiah and faith in Him as the means of salvation; they now believed that being a Jew (Matt. 3:7-9), being circumcised (Acts 15:1), and keeping the Law was the method by which a man became righteous. Mk. 10:17-20
- I. When Christ came to the nation, He did not fit their mold of legalistic Judaism with His message of faith, so they rejected Him, and finally murdered Him.
- J. This resulted in the 5th cycle of discipline, the judgment that destroyed the nation and sent the people into captivity to various nations around them. Matt. 21:33-46
- K. The irony is that their system of man-made religion not only did not deliver the promised relationship with God, it led to the most serious of judgments that resulted in their dispersion for nearly 2000 years.
- L. Jesus had warned the disciples that the hostility and hatred of negative volition would come primarily from the source of these religious legalists. Mat. 23:29-34
- M. While we are not attempting to promote a liberal form of Christianity that dismisses the **moral importance** of the Law, we must recognize that legalism is an equally grave error that must be avoided.
- N. Those that embrace any form of legalism will find themselves at odds with those that promote the true principles of grace; those that hold to grace do not accept man-made methods of pleasing God, no matter how well intentioned they may be.

III. Observations on legalism during the ministry of Christ.

- A. While there were several sects that existed in Judaism during the life of Christ, the Word of God makes it plain that the Pharisaic sect was the foremost promoter and enforcer of Jewish legalism.
- B. As such, they were consistently at odds with Jesus Christ over His conduct, the conduct of His disciples, and His teaching; this resulted in persecution toward Him, and harassing Him at every opportunity. Matt. 9:11,34, 12:2,14, 16:1
- C. Jesus Christ made it quite clear to His disciples that they were to avoid the insidious nature of the legalistic teaching of the Pharisees, which further infuriated His adversaries. Matt. 16:6-12
- D. The principle He cited is equally true today: a little legalism introduced into sound doctrine will eventually work its evil throughout. Gal. 5:9
- E. Jesus called their legalistic system **the traditions of men**, and it is clear that they had elevated their man-made system to a level that was considered to be as binding as the Word of God. Mk. 7:7-9
- F. Their man-made approach to the Word of God and His plan led, as it always does, to a form of self-righteousness, which God rejects. Matt. 5:20
- G. The sad but obvious consequence of their legalism was a strict adherence to their own rules, while neglecting the revealed Word of God in more important areas. Mk. 7:8-9
- H. This caused them to disregard such important concepts as justice (impartiality/fairness), mercy (compassion/grace), and faithfulness, which they overlooked in their zeal to fulfill their own commands. Matt. 23:23

- I. Therefore, while they had an overt façade of righteousness, they were often guilty of pursuing human approbation (Matt. 23:5-7); although they may have looked acceptable to those that did not understand the issues, they were altogether unacceptable to God, who looks on the heart. Matt. 23:25-26
- J. The Bible is clear on the fact that Jesus and John the Baptist expressed their intolerance toward the Jewish religious leaders that promoted this system of legalism. Matt. 3:7, 23:33
- K. The Pharisees manifested certain characteristics that can be seen today in those that have legalistic trends, and operate under them, attempting to force their opinions on believers without scriptural corroboration.
 1. These types of people often view themselves as superior to others around them, reflecting a condescending and arrogant attitude toward others. Jn. 7:47-52, 9:40, 11:49
 2. This results from the fact that they build their righteousness on any real or perceived unrighteousness they may have observed in others. Matt. 9:2-3,10-13,32-34, 12:1-2
 3. They consistently engage in scrutinizing the conduct of others, looking for any reason to make an accusation and **prove** how righteous they are compared to the unrighteous masses. Lk. 6:7
 4. Once they find anything that they deem to be a violation of their righteous standards, they waste no time in attacking those that do not submit themselves to these human viewpoint ideas. Matt. 12:1-13
 5. This results in overstepping their legitimate authority to make righteous judgments and causes them to intrude on the rights of others without any biblical mandate to do so. Jn. 9:22,34
 6. They determine for themselves what constitutes sin; further, anyone that acts in any fashion that is not consistent with their legalistic views is deemed to be at odds with the will of God. Lk. 7:31-35
 7. This form of power and approbation lust causes them to think more highly of themselves than they should; they think they are better than other people, and rely on a hypercritical approach to the plan of God that actually frustrates spiritual adjustment. Matt. 23:2,6-7,12,13
 8. They are not afraid to meddle in other believers' private affairs, without any mandate to do so, which is equated with overt sinning of the worst kind. IPet. 4:15
 9. On the other hand, they overlook failures in themselves and others that have the same STA weaknesses; they ignore their own sinning in order to focus more on the **bad things** that others are doing. Matt. 23:24
 10. They may seek out and exploit others that had legalistic trends, who are weak in grace, and attempt to conform them into their own legalistic mold. Matt. 23:15
 11. This type of approach to doctrine does not result in a true fear of God; rather, it results in a fear of man, as people employ heavy-handed techniques to spiritually bully other people. Jn. 7:13, 9:22, 12:42, 19:38
 12. Those with a legalistic trend inevitably impose unreasonable expectations on others, while they are not willing to evaluate themselves and deal with their own failings. Matt. 23:4

- IV. Legalism is antithetical to grace.
- A. As we have noted in many places, grace is the title and policy of God's plan.
 - B. Many passages may be adduced to demonstrate that grace and faith are the only means to procure a relationship with God; it is a grace-minus-works proposition. Acts 15:11; Rom. 3:24; Eph. 2:5,8-9; et al.
 - C. Generally speaking, even most sound, orthodox fundamentalists recognize and accept that salvation is not obtained by means of works.
 - D. However, Ph₂ legalism is a different issue, since many do not recognize the fact that our Ph₂ spirituality and growth are also a grace proposition. IIPet. 3:18
 1. This verse provides a mandate for the believer to pursue the principle of grace and knowledge to continue his spiritual growth.
 2. Grace is the antidote for the infiltration of legalism in any form, and knowledge is the antidote for a lack of Bible doctrine.
 - E. It is only by grace that we have experiential fellowship with God (IJn. 1:9), by grace that God communicates the realm of Bible doctrine to us (Eph. 3:8-10), and it is grace that provides all we need to function honorably before God. IICor. 9:8
 - F. While we acknowledge that there is a place for works in the life of the believer, we also recognize that these works must proceed from the grace of God and an understanding of Bible doctrine. James 2:21-25
 1. Abraham passed the test of sacrificing Isaac by virtue of his faith in God in general, and the doctrine of resurrection in particular. Heb. 11:17-19
 2. Rahab made her application of hiding the spies based on her faith in God and the understanding that God was going to give her land to the Jews.
 - G. It is the growth in grace and knowledge that allows believers to understand what constitutes sin and how to deal with it; further, it instructs believers with respect to the freedoms they enjoy under the principle of grace. Gal. 5:1,13
 - H. While grace does not condone sin, it accepts the reality that the STA is functional and active throughout the believer's Ph₂, and makes every provision necessary so the believer can grow spiritually to maturity. IJn.2:1, 1:9
 - I. Many believers have fallen into the trap of believing that the pursuit of sinlessness is the goal of the Christian way of life; however, this is refuted by the apostle John. IJn. 1:8,10
 - J. Legalism supplants the grace of God in the Christian way of life with some brand of relative self-righteousness and seeks to bring believers into bondage, denying them the very freedoms that God provides. Gal. 2:3-4
 - K. This attacks the freedom of volition, attempts to read the thoughts and intents of the heart, and seeks to impose relative righteousness over the true righteousness that comes from the free-will application of Bible doctrine under the privacy of the Royal Priesthood. ITim. 1:5
- V. Legalism promotes all the worst in man, in the name of attempting to gain God's favor or help others.
- A. Generally speaking, the legalistic believer probably is likely not aware of his own inconsistencies, believing that he is honestly attempting to please God and help others.
 - B. However, legalism is the willful attempt to usurp the authority of the Word of God and substitute the authority of men. Mk. 7:8-9
 - C. Legalism is about rules and controlling others instead of love, acceptance, and sound personal relationships that accept people for who they are. Rom. 14:1, 15:7

- D. It is an inappropriate focus on things outside of ourselves and a lack of focus on things inside of ourselves, the things with which believers ought to be concerned. Matt. 7:1; ICor. 11:29
- E. The person that falls prey to legalism is often unaware that he is engaged in sinful judging of others, based only on his own sometimes faulty standards. Matt. 7:3-5
- F. Jesus warned that sinful judging of others was not only forbidden, but that the standards that one employed when engaging in sinful judging would be the standard God used in judging that believer. Matt. 7:1-2
- G. Legalism is also about manipulation and control; power lust motivates the believer to get what he deems to be correct by pressuring and bullying others.
- H. While this approach can be successful from the human viewpoint, it only brings bondage for those making the rules, and for those that attempt to please them; legalism does not produce willing application from **a clean heart, a good conscience, and a sincere faith in doctrine.** ITim. 1:5
- I. Generally, legalism is found in the commands not to do something that the Scripture does not condemn, based on some misguided attempt to please God, and to protect other believers from themselves. Col. 2:20-22
 - 1. For example, a believer may find that eating only vegetables, working out consistently, avoiding alcohol and tobacco, and sleeping exactly 9.5 hours every night produces optimum results for him.
 - 2. He then begins to badger all those around him that are eating meat, not working out, drinking, smoking, and not sleeping the **correct** amount to follow his example.
 - 3. Then, he turns his standards, which may well be good for him, into a duty for others; he then judges others for their failure to perform those things according to his standards.
 - 4. Suddenly, his desire for another's well being has become nothing more than a self-righteous attempt to control other believers, all in the name of **caring about people.**
 - 5. In the worse case scenario, he begins to actively exclude others, gossip about them, or persecute them because they do not live up to his self-imposed standards. Lk. 9:53-54
 - 6. This sort of behavior is indefensible from the scriptural standpoint; further, it is very destructive to a local church.

- VI. The believer must recognize that legalism is often an attempt to take the Word of God to an extreme that the Author did not intend.
 - A. For instance, the following set of statements may be shown to be logically true, but foreign to the intent of Scripture.
 - 1. God is righteous and opposed to evil.
 - 2. Everything outside of God's plan is evil.
 - 3. Movies are outside of God's plan, mostly made by unbelievers, and are therefore evil.
 - 4. Logically then, a believer cannot ever watch a movie if he hopes to avoid evil and please God.
 - 5. However, the only problem with this logic is that the Word of God does not state **thou shall not go to a movie;** there is no prohibition against entertainment.
 - 6. The legalistic person would suggest that movies are bad, contain objectionable material, and must be avoided.
 - 7. The believer that is sound in the faith realizes that he has the freedom to watch a movie, and has the doctrine to evaluate the content; he has been instructed in the truth so he can recognize and reject human viewpoint and false doctrine when he is exposed to it.

B. Legalism and drinking.

1. The Bible does not condemn the use of alcohol among believers; however, it does condemn the abuse of alcohol. Deut. 14:26; Eph. 5:18; Tit. 2:3
2. Drinking is a freedom in Christ and the moral freedom to imbibe (or not) belongs to each believer.
3. Those that believe that drinking is a sin, or that it means they are better believers because they do not drink, manifest legalism in this area.
4. The legalists of Jesus' day derided Him for drinking alcohol, but this did not change His lifestyle. Matt. 11:18-19
5. While we have the freedom to drink, we must recognize that it may be wise to abstain in some situations in order to apply the law of love. Rom. 14:21

C. Legalism and abuse of freedom.

1. There can be little doubt that all believers have or will abuse their freedom in Christ at some point in the Christian way of life.
2. Those with legalistic tendencies will pounce on these failures and establish themselves as STA monitors; this is often done in the name of protecting other believers, the church at large, and God's plan.
3. They will then seek to limit or even remove any situation in which a believer might abuse his freedom.
4. Additionally, they may seek to make an issue of the doctrine of separation in areas where believers are engaging in incidental sinning.
5. However, the Bible is clear on the fact that the corrective for sinful abuses in the life of any believer is Divine discipline, not legalistic prohibitions. Heb. 12:5ff
6. Further, the leadership of the local church has the right to administer discipline according to biblical guidelines only, not according to personal preferences. Matt. 18:15; ICor. 5:1ff
7. Even this legitimate authority is only free to administer discipline to those under their authority; the legalistic person would assume the authority he does not possess to mentally judge, verbally castigate, and overtly discipline other believers.
8. While someone else may find a particular activity questionable, if a believer is not compromising doctrine, missing Bible class, failing to function under his spiritual gift, or fulfilling other responsibilities in his niche, other believers should not judge him.

D. Legalism and separation.

1. The doctrine of separation is designed to protect the believer from inappropriate relationships that would be harmful to his relationship with God. ICor. 15:33
2. The intent of this doctrine is to refrain from embracing those that are God's enemies as our friends, pursuing social life, fellowship, or companionship with those that are negative. IICor. 6:14ff
3. The Bible makes it clear that the real purpose of the doctrine of separation is to protect the believer from the cosmos and those that have abandoned sound doctrine, no matter how close the relationship may have been. James 4:4; IJn. 9-11; Matt. 10:34-37
4. Some would insinuate that any association at any time with those that are negative is a violation of this doctrine, effectively meaning that believers would have to go out of this world. ICor. 5:10
5. Such would mean that believers could not effectively function as ambassadors, present the witness of the life, and fish for men. IICor. 5:20

6. There are those that insinuate that any involvement at any level with those that are negative is a violation of separation. ICor. 10:27
 7. However, this is only true to the extent that the involvement is designed to establish or maintain a relationship with those that the believer knows to be negative; it is not an excuse not to let your light shine before men. Matt. 5:16
- E. Legalism and holidays.
1. The New Testament makes it quite clear that we are free from observing any special religious holidays in this dispensation. Rom. 14:1ff; Gal. 4:10
 2. The context of Galatians 4 deals with the fact that the Galatian churches were reverting back to observing Jewish holidays as a means of maintaining their relationship with God, which Paul declared unnecessary. Gal. 4:9
 3. Romans 14 declares that observance of holidays, or non-observance of holidays, is inconsequential, and should not be the basis for contention among believers. Rom. 14:1,3
 4. There is no command to observe them, nor is there a command not to observe them; it is a matter of individual understanding and preference.
 5. Each believer is to understand the issues clearly in his own mind, enjoy his freedom in Christ, and refrain from judging other believers. Rom. 14:4,10,13
 6. While a legalistic person would tell believers that it is a sin to observe and enjoy a holiday, the Bible says that no day is unclean in itself. Rom. 14:14
 7. The strong believer in this context is the one **that has faith that he may eat all things, and the one that observes the day.** Rom. 14:2,6
 8. Both are serving the Lord as their conscience dictates and neither is to concern himself with the other; he is to leave the matter up to the Lord and practice the dictum to **live and let live!** Rom. 14:10,12
- F. Legalism with respect to dating and the doctrine of marriage.
1. There are those legalistic believers that have determined that the will of God for everyone is to be married; however, the Word of God clearly refutes that human viewpoint, and disparages meddling. ICor. 7:8-9; Prov. 26:17
 2. The Word of God is clear that if one is to marry, he/she should only marry a believer (ICor. 9:5; IICor. 6:14); additionally, based on the principle that **bad company corrupts good morals**, we teach that they should seek a positive believer. ICor. 15:33
 3. Because of these factors, we strongly encourage positive believers not to begin romantic relationships with those that are negative; however, all the rules in the world do not stop people from doing what they want to do.
 4. Some have taken this to a new extreme that is foreign to the intent of scripture; some have taught that two positive believers cannot date, stating that one can only date someone if they know they are intending to marry that person.
 5. Further, the thinking has been espoused that two positive believers that are dating cannot hold hands, hug, or kiss, because all such activity always leads to illicit sex.
 6. We know from the Bible that God will bring people together at the proper time and believers should pray about this, not be too quick to get romantically involved at a young age, and wait on God or provide one's right mate.
 7. However, any careful study of the Scriptures reveals that many believers came from less than perfect backgrounds, and got together in many ways that we might not necessarily sanction; they are no less married because of this.

- a. Arranged marriage. Gen. 24
 - b. Marrying a hooker. Ruth 4:21
 - c. Interracial marriage. Num. 12:1
 - d. Adultery and murder. IISam. 11:4,15
 - e. 699 marriages and one legitimate wife. IKings 11:3; SOS 6:8-9
8. Therefore, each believer should keep his nose out of other people's business and allow them to work out their own salvation with respect to dating and marriage.
- G. Legalism and MPR.
- 1. There is no question among those that understand the Bible that the importance of assembly for Bible class is the highest priority. Heb. 10:25
 - 2. While I have consistently and repeatedly exhorted you not to miss Bible class for frivolous reasons, some have suggested that one must be seriously ill or dying in order to legitimately miss a class.
 - 3. It is obvious that people miss Bible classes for reasons that are clearly inappropriate; however, that does not give other believers the right or mandate to judge that believer.
 - 4. Obviously, missing Bible class to pursue the cosmos is not part of God's directive will; it is equally wrong to miss class habitually, since it betrays a problem with priorities. James 4:13; Heb.10:25
 - 5. Occasional, appropriate reasons for missing class include:
 - a. **Sickness.** The legalistic person always comes to class in order to demonstrate how positive they are; they possibly infect many other believers and cause them to miss Bible class.
 - b. **Vacation.** The legalistic person doesn't believe in vacations, but if they take one, they only go where there is another local church, so they won't **miss class**.
 - c. **Work.** The legalistic person insists that missing Bible class anytime (even once or twice a year) for your job is a sin.
 - d. **Testing.** You may find that you have a flat tire, your car won't start, or some other physical reason prevents you from attending. Never fear, the legalist will judge you harshly!
 - e. **Family responsibilities.** Although the believer must be careful here, there are legitimate reasons that may cause one to miss class occasionally. However, do not fall into the cosmic trap that every school/job/social event/family crisis etc. demands your presence. Parents can often take turns at these events and minimize missing class.
 - 6. When one is confronted with the potential for missing class, the proper procedure is to first attempt to reschedule the conflicting event.
 - 7. If that is not possible, then the believer must ask himself which is more important to God in this situation, be clear in his own mind, and act accordingly, not fearing the backlash he might get from his legalistic critic.
- H. These are simply examples of legalism; any doctrine can have some legalism attached to it, taking it to some new level that is not envisioned in the Word of God.

VII. Conclusions.

- A. Legalism is an insidious form of thinking that can easily creep into any ministry; therefore, each communicator must be on guard for any tendencies in along this line, either in himself or in those allotted to his charge.

- B. While the communicator must evaluate situations in his ministry, he must be aware of the danger of becoming judgmental, hypercritical, and allowing legalism to gain any foothold in his ministry. Heb. 13:17
- C. As believers in Christ, we have been set free; it is grace and the truths of Bible doctrine that provide and maintain our Ph₂ freedom in Christ. Gal. 5:1; Jn. 8:31-32
- D. Recognize that a person may have some legalistic trends, fail in certain areas, and not be a complete and total legalist.
 - 1. Peter is the perfect example of falling into the legalistic traps of the Judaizers when he was otherwise positive and growing. Gal. 2:11-14
 - 2. This also makes it quite clear that those that want to impose their legalism on believers will seek to intimidate and bully believers. Gal. 2:12
 - 3. However, while not explicitly stated in the Word of God, it seems logical to infer that Peter recognized his problem and dealt with it.
- E. Both legalism and its liberalism counterpart are extremes; we should strive to maintain the balance between grace and righteousness.
- F. For those that have some legalistic trends, the believer is to maintain the balance of grace, not react inappropriately, and grace them out. Rom. 14:3
- G. We must strive to maintain a balance between grace and knowledge, and not react to liberal or legalistic abuses.
 - 1. Grace without knowledge leads to gross misapplication. ICor. 5:1-6
 - 2. Knowledge without grace tends only to arrogance. ICor. 8:1
- H. The exhortation **to keep standing firm and do not be subject again to a yoke of slavery** is quite appropriate to this subject. Gal. 5:1
- I. As a believer, analyze situations carefully according to the doctrine that you have been taught, figure out what is appropriate for that situation, do not seek to superimpose your choices on others, enjoy the Christian way of life, and do not let any legalist condemn you for what you approve with a clear conscience. Rom. 14:22
- J. Also, all believers must recognize that they are not to seek to live the Christian life for others; each believer will be evaluated for how he oriented to and applied the truth. IICor. 5:10
- K. Believers should also recognize that a desire to help others is legitimate, but they must avoid meddling in the lives of believers, which is entirely inappropriate. IPet. 4:15
- L. Further, all believers should recognize from the examples found within the Word of God that making more laws/rules is not the answer to living the Christian way of life. Acts 15:10
- M. Very often, the legalistic person seems to have forgotten the sins and indiscretions of their own youth; remember that age does not make anyone an expert in living the Christian way of life.