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a *Grace Notes* course

## **Doctrines of the Christian Faith**

Doctrine 100

by Warren Doud

Lesson 10 of 10

Forgiveness

Godliness

Happiness (Joy)

Hope

Legalism

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## Doctrine 100

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## Forgiveness

The word “forgive” is a Grace word, in the English as well as in the Greek. An early meaning in English was “to give or to grant”. Then, forgive came to mean “to remit a debt; to give up resentment or claim for requital; to pardon an offense.”

All of us are debtors to others, to society as a whole. And we often feel that people owe us many things in our human relationships. We feel we are owed courtesy and consideration. Sometimes we think that we are owed reward or status or promotion in some enterprise, or on the job. We are certainly owed fair treatment, justice, restitution and many other things.

But, many people in America are spiritually, ethically, and morally bankrupt. They simply cannot pay society what they owe! They are thoughtless, selfish, ungracious. What should a Christian do about all of the debts owed to him. Answer: forgive them, as Christ forgave you.

A Christian who practices Grace thinking (divine viewpoint) will become a forgiving person. To forgive means “to give up a claim; to cease bearing resentment”.

The rich man in Luke 7 was able to forgive the two debtors because he was prosperous. He gave to them out of his prosperity. A person can only give to others out of what God has already provided in the way of prosperity. In terms of money, the principle is “Let him that stole, steal no more; rather, let him labor, doing with his hands the thing that is good, that he may have to give to him that needeth.”

As a growing Christian, you have many other kinds of prosperity, by the Grace of God. You have intellectual prosperity (divine viewpoint). You have spiritual prosperity (peace with God). You have emotional prosperity (relaxed mental attitude). You have financial prosperity (mastery of details of life). You have social prosperity (stable marriage, stable family life, etc.).

Wherever in your life you find that someone else owes you something, you have the wherewithal to

forgive him! God has forgiven all of us who are absolutely without resources of our own. And He is not expecting or demanding some kind of payment in return for His Grace gifts. And we are to be channels of Grace to the world. “Out of your innermost being shall flow rivers of living water.”

## Godliness

This is a study of the Greek word (eusebeia), used in the New Testament to express the idea of inner piety, spiritual maturity, or godliness. In TITUS 1:1, the Apostle Paul states that he is an apostle of Jesus Christ according to the criterion of the faith of the chosen people of God who have a full and applied knowledge of the truth which is the standard for godliness.

The word (eusebeia) has an interesting history. It was first used by the Greek poet, Homer, in about 1000 BC. From Homer the word came into use in the classical Greek of Athens (Attic Greek) where it referred to personal piety in the fulfillment of human relationships. It was also used to describe a person who was faithful in fulfilling his duties to whatever Greek gods dominated the city in which he lived. The Attic Greek word always referred to the outward expression of piety, such as the giving of gifts to the god, participation in sacrifices and worship, or making a show of religion in public.

As the word (eusebeia) began to be used in the koine Greek, it came to mean “inner piety”, or spirituality, a duty which the believer owes to God in the inner man. The principle in the Titus context is that of the control or filling of the Holy Spirit which produces qualities of conformity to Christ.

The following scripture passages contain the word (eusebeia), invariably translated “godliness” (in the KJV). Read these verses along with their contexts before continuing in the next section.

ACTS 3:12

1 TIM. 2:2; 3:16; 4:7,8; 6:3,5,6,11

2 TIM. 3:5

2 PET. 1:3,6,7; 3:11

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### PRINCIPLES OF EUSEBEIA

A true man of God has qualities of inner piety - the characteristics of a spiritually mature person. This is not a phony façade put on to please or impress people. The source of this godliness is the Word of God. The godly person has not only learned doctrine academically, but he has also seen that word applied to his life in edification over a period of years.

Spirituality is an absolute quality, depending on a believer's walk with the Lord, and particularly on his maintaining his fellowship with the Lord through confession. But none of this is visible.

So - how can you tell when true spirituality and maturity are present? Or, how do you know the difference between a godly man and one who is merely well educated and in control of himself? A carnal believer, the novice Christian, can be moral, can use the right vocabulary, can wear a suit and carry a Bible. He can fool some of the people some of the time.

But the godly believer is known by "his fruits" - the fruit of the Holy Spirit - things that an unbeliever, or the carnal believer, cannot produce. Godliness is produced in the life of a Christian who is both learning doctrine and growing thereby through edification.

Read GAL 5:19-21, the works of the flesh.

The works of the flesh are obvious enough. They are the product of an inner life controlled by the sin nature, by the trends and lusts of the soul. And as a Christian grows in Christ, he gains victory over areas of weakness. The Christian Way of Life is characterized by the putting away of negatives, the sin that so easily besets, and by putting on the new man.

GAL. 5:22-26

EPH. 4:17-25.

The new man not only lives in the Spirit (not visible), but he also walks in the Spirit (visible). One of the great themes of the Epistle to Titus is that of the outward walk, which is a demonstration to the world that the inner life which is claimed is genuine. Three illustrations are given in Titus 2.

1. In TITUS 2:4,5, young women are to be taught how to lead godly lives so that "the Word of God be not blasphemed." We have a responsibility for public opinion about the Word of God.
2. In 2:7,8, Titus himself is told to show himself a "pattern of good works" and to have "sound speech that cannot be condemned" in order not to supply detractors with ammunition for their criticisms.
3. And in 2:9,10, servants are to maintain godly lives in their relations to their masters in order that they might "adorn the doctrine of God our Savior in all things." We are to live as "decorations" to the doctrine of God.

The whole letter to Titus is an inspired document which, among other things, provides many illustrations (in chapters 1 and 2) of how godliness (eusebeia) is supposed to be observed in the outward characteristics of believers of all ranks: overseers and elders, older men, older women, younger women, younger men, servants, and Titus himself.

Godliness is the concept of the inward life and the outward appearance of the fruit of the Spirit.

For example, in the spiritual fruit of love we see genuine care and regard for people, an impersonal love for people who are different, even though they are enemies. This love results in the philozenos of TITUS 1:8. [See the notes on Characteristics of Impersonal Love]. Love is the absence of mental attitude sins and sins of the tongue. The negatives have been eliminated from the believer's life so that (1) he no longer hates, despises, disdains, or envies other people, (2) he no longer maligns or ridicules them, and therefore (3) he is free to have a ministry with others that is not hindered by offensiveness or bitterness.

Joy is the spiritual fruit which enables a Christian to have happiness that does not depend on the details of life. He has a stable mental attitude from looking to Jesus and trusting the Father for everything. He does not fall into moody depression when things go wrong or he is criticized or maligned. He does not fall into wide emotional swings. He does not depend on others

to prop up his happiness. I TIM. 6:6, "Godliness (eusebeia) with contentment is great gain..."

A believer who has peace is a master of the Faith-Rest technique. He is nearly unflappable, because he has a lot of practice in placing every distress, every disaster, in the hands of the Lord. He is the most relaxed person in the neighborhood. He does not have chronic worry about the present or future. He knows that the Lord can handle everything. So he is not paranoid. Even if someone is really out to get him, he is relaxed and praying, even for the enemy who is plotting against him. He places great confidence in the Lord, especially regarding death, knowing and resting in the fact that "absent from the body" means "present with the Lord." So he is not one of those who "through fear of death are all their lifetime subject to bondage" (HEB. 2:15).

Well, for homework, you can make up your own descriptions for the remaining parts of the fruit of the Spirit: Longsuffering, Gentleness, Goodness, Faith, Meekness, Temperance. Just remember that God's plan for you is that you continue to be a godly Christian.

## Happiness (Joy)

**Philemon 7, "Your love has given me great joy and encouragement, because you, brother, have refreshed the hearts of the saints."**

This phrase demands some of our attention, for Paul is in prison, he is chained, his physical movements are confined, his recreation is very limited, his pleasures are denied; in these circumstances, how can Paul make the statement that he is not just happy, but that 'he has much happiness?'

Happiness is the situation of well-being or general prosperity of mankind. It encompasses the circumstances of life and relationships. And happiness can run the gamut from tranquillity to intense ecstasies, and the term often used in Scripture to describe happiness is "blessedness." Blessedness relates happiness to God and His Plan of grace.

Happiness has many different relative facets:

1. Happiness related to prosperity is described in Psalm 128: 1-4, "Blessed are all who fear the Lord, who walk in his ways. You will eat the fruit of your labor; blessings and prosperity will be yours. Your wife will be like a fruitful vine within your house; your sons will be like olive shoots around your table. Thus is the man blessed who fears the Lord."
2. I Peter 3:14 declares that believers may be happy even in suffering, "But even if you should suffer for what is right, you are blessed. Do not fear what they fear; do not be frightened."
3. Proverbs 3:13 says that true happiness is found through knowing God's Word, "Blessed is the man who finds wisdom, the man who gains understanding."
4. Proverbs 14:21 states that happiness may be gained from treating others with kindness and grace, "He who despises his neighbor sins, but blessed is he who is kind to the needy."
5. Romans 14:22 says that a clear conscience produces a type of happiness, "So whatever you believe about these things keep between yourself and God. Blessed is the man who does not condemn himself by what he approves."
6. Proverbs 29:18 states that happiness comes from obeying the laws of the land and that lawlessness and spiritual apostasy accompany each other, "Where there is no revelation, the people cast off restraint; but blessed is he who keeps the law."
7. Psalm 144:13-15 states that happiness comes from living in a free and prosperous nation.

To fully understand the concept of happiness, we must understand the happiness of God. For God's happiness is unique in the sense that God's happiness is absolute, perfect and unlimited. In other words, because God is perfect He has perfect happiness. And as God is eternal, so is His happiness; God's happiness never ends and has never been diminished in the least and cannot be changed.

And since God is perfect this means that He is perfect Righteousness; thus God's perfect

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happiness is directly connected to one simple fact: God is never wrong, has never been wrong, and never will be wrong. This makes God happy. Additionally, since God is perfect He is also perfect Justice; this means God is never inequitable, unfair or unjust.

This makes God happy. Inasmuch as God is perfect, His love is perfect; this means that God loves the other members of the God-head with a perfect love and that He loves Himself with a perfect love and that He loves His creatures with a perfect love; this ability to love perfectly, without bounds or mitigation, makes God happy. And because God is Omnipotent, this gives Him an unlimited capacity to be happy. In His Omniscience God's very genius adds comprehension and sharpness to His happiness; in other words, God knows that He is happy.

Finally, in His Sovereignty, in His Reign, in His Su-premacy, God has determined that He will share His perfect happiness with mankind, for Psalm 43:4 says, "Then I will go to the altar of God, to God, my joy and my delight. I will praise you with the harp, O God, my God." And Psalm 97:12 tells how God shares his happiness with mankind, "Rejoice in the Lord, you who are righteous [perfect Righteousness given to mankind at the point of salvation], and praise his holy name." And Habakkuk 3:18 states that once the believer has God's perfect Righteousness given to him/her, then the believer may be given anything and everything by God, for God gives to His perfect Righteousness (in the believer) from His perfect Righteousness (in Himself).

The fact that God has determined to give His happiness to mankind and found a way to do it is called grace. And God's instrument of grace is the Lord Jesus Christ; thus true happiness begins at the point of belief in Christ. This is where happiness begins. From there, the more the believer knows about God and Christ, the greater the believer's capacity for happiness becomes. Thus through spiritual growth the believer's happiness may become as the happiness of God: without limit, without dependence on circumstances, or events, or people, or any exterior influence. And John 13:17 declares that once spiritual maturity is attained, the believer

shares God's perfect happiness, "Now that you know these things (God's Word), you will be blessed (intense happiness) if you do them."

In other words, God's Word is the source of the believer's happiness, according to John 17:13, "I am coming to you now, but I say these things while I am still in the world, so that they may have the full measure of my joy within them."

And sharing God's perfect happiness should be the estate of every believer, according to Philippians 4:4 and I Peter 1:8, which say, "Rejoice in the Lord always. I will say it again: Rejoice!" "Though you have not seen him, you love him; and even though you do not see him now, you believe in him and are filled with an inexpressible and glorious joy." And once the believer shares the perfect happiness of God, the believer's happiness cannot be diminished by: circumstances, things, or people, according to Philippians 4:11,12; Hebrews 13:5,6, and Hebrews 12:2,3, which say, "I know what it is to be in need, and I know what it is to have plenty. I have learned the secret of being content in any and every situation, whether well fed or hungry, whether living in plenty or in want." "Keep your lives free from the love of money and be content with what you have, because God has said, 'Never will I leave you; never will I forsake you.' So we say with confidence, 'The Lord is my helper, I will not be afraid. What can man do to me?'" "Consider him who endured such opposition from sinful men, so that you will not grow weary and lose heart."

Thus, even though mankind inhabits an imperfect world, mankind can have the perfect happiness of God. And according to I Corinthians 11:24,25, Philippians 1:3, and Song of Songs 3:1, 4:6, and 8:6, the sharing of God's happiness increases the believer's ability to love others and God. Jude 24 asserts that the happiness experienced by the believer in heaven is more intense than that on earth; this degree of intensity is related to the locale, heaven, and not to any limitations on the sharing of God's perfect happiness.

Isaiah 35:1,2 declares that in the future Millennial Reign of Christ happiness will be ubiquitous.

And according to the following verses, II Samuel 1:19,20, Ecclesiastes 9:9, 11:8,9, and Proverbs

23:24,25, the happiness derived from the 'world,' sin, evil, and 'pleasure' is temporary and inadequate. For "the aesthetic age seeks satisfaction through the senses, physical beauty, erotic excitement, through success in any of its guises." And true inner happiness cannot be found through the senses or celebrity.

Ultimately, the truly happy person, the believer who shares the perfect happiness of God, provides happiness for, and is a 'ministry of refreshment to,' other believers and unbelievers. This concept is found in Philippians 2:28,29, Romans 16:32, II Corinthians 7:13, and our verse, Philemon 7, which says, "For I have come to have much happiness and encouragement by your love (for Christ) because the tender affections of the saints have been refreshed through you, brother."

Paul's use of the term "brother," ADELPHOS, indicates that Philemon is not only a fellow-believer, a member of the royal priest/family of God along with Paul, but that Paul is about to discuss a 'family' matter.

The Greek term for "refreshed" is ANAPAULO; and this concept was briefly discussed in the above dissertation on Happiness. However, the idea commands more attention and more detail, as 'refreshment' is an attribute of those believers that have attained spiritual maturity. Thus we might say that the 'ministry of refreshment' is the realization and function of the spiritually mature.

Paul calls Philemon a 'refreshment.' This means that Philemon is a vivifying and soothing personality to all that interrelate with him. Spiritually and soulfully, Philemon provides refreshment to others. He is a pleasure to be with and around; others seek out his company so that they might be restored by his calm faith in God, by his virtue-love toward others, by his real compassion, and by his doctrinal perspective toward life.

## Hope

Hope is the mental attitude of confidence that results from learning and applying Bible truth regarding the future.

In Bible usage, "hope" is synonymous with "confidence". Growth in confidence comes along with growth in Christ. Applied knowledge of Bible principles of time and eternity leads to supreme confidence in God's Word.

The Christian has confidence in

- an eternal inheritance, 1 Pet. 1:4,5
- the new home in the future, John 14:1-3
- the resurrection body, 1 Cor. 15:51-57

See also 1 Th. 4:16-18; Phil. 3:21; and 1 John 3:1,2.

The hope of Israel is in their coming Messiah (the Second Coming of Christ, His kingdom on earth, and the new earth of eternity.

Luke 1:67-79; 2:28-32; Acts 26:6,7; 28:20; Eph. 2:12.

The Abrahamic Covenant (amplified by the Palestinian, Davidic, and New Covenants) promised to Israel the land of Canaan, the eternal seed (the Messiah), and blessing (new birth). Israel's hope lies in these promises of God.

Abraham's hope was directed to the promise of a new city, the New Jerusalem, Heb. 11:9,10.

The hope for the Church is the "blessed hope" of the Rapture. Titus 2:13-15; 1 John 3:2,3; 1 Thess. 4:13-18

Hope is derived from such passages as Rev. 2:14 in which it is stated that there will be no more death, tears, pain, etc.

The hope (confidence) we have in Christ has caused death to lose its sting and the grave to lose its victory. 1 Cor. 15:54-58.

The word hopeless should never be in the Christian's vocabulary.

## Legalism

### Introduction

God's plan is a Grace plan. God the Father does the work, man receives the benefit. God receives the glory for His own works; man receives no glory.

The greatest distortion to Grace is religious legalism!

Religion and Legalism are Satan's Ace and King of trump, the primary means by which he "blinds the minds of those who seek Christ" and which are included in Eph. 4:14 as part of "...every wind of doctrine, sleight of men, cunning craftiness, by which they lie in wait to deceive." By these means, Satan tries to disrupt the plan of God and blind people to Grace principles.

I use the word "religion" in a strict sense here, not in the general sense of "the service or worship of God." In the general sense, of course, Christianity could be viewed as a religion. But most religion is legalistic, and I want to distinguish the Christian way of life from other religious practice. So the definition I use is:

**Religion is any system in which man by his own efforts tries to earn the approval of God.**

Furthermore, the definition for legalism in this paper has to do only with religious legalism, so:

**Legalism is a religious system that teaches that a person can do something to earn or merit salvation or blessing from God.**

The purpose of this article is to help you identify religious legalism in all of its forms. The article will define and illustrate the concept of legalism, and show you how to distinguish legalism from Grace thinking and activities. There are also numerous references to Bible teaching on legalism, particularly from the Epistle to the Galatians, where the Jews had a very difficult time reconciling Law and Grace.

It is very important that you understand the doctrine of Grace also. Grace is an extensive Bible category. The majority of the blessings and privileges of the Christian life depend on knowing and using Grace principles. So it's vital that you master the subject.

To understand these concepts clearly, you should also study some of the other topics which are related to legalism, especially Grace.

Some categorical studies which you can request from Grace Notes are: The Barrier; Circumcision; Confession of Sin; Grace; Judgment, Justice, and Judging; Satan; Spirituality.

## Defining Legalism

The standard (Webster's New Collegiate) definition for legalism is: strict, literal, or excessive conformity to the law or to a religious or moral Code.

This definition does not seem very clear. What is, after all, "excessive" conformity to the law? I suppose it would be excessive to insist on driving 55 mph on the Interstate when people are stacked up behind you wanting to go 70. Legalism on the highway is sometimes dangerous.

But, strict obedience to God's laws is not wrong. In fact, failure to obey is sin. Also, you can certainly decide to set a high standard for yourself in some area, based on your understanding of the obligations of the Christian life. This is not wrong, and it is not legalism (by our previous definition of religious legalism), even though it might be strict conformance. (It is legalism, however, to think that by maintaining high standards you are somehow doing something to merit salvation or to earn blessings or rewards.)

For example, your view of the moral code of Rom. 14:21 may lead you to adopt abstinence from alcohol as a standard, out of your regard for weaker brethren who might be caused to stumble. This would certainly be a strict and legal conformity; but it's not legalism, because you are not trying to earn points with God by your actions. Someone else may consider this excessive, but it's none of their business. It is not wrong for you to set high standards for yourself, and neither is it religious legalism. In fact, quite often what a grace believer calls legalistic is really someone else's setting high standards for himself.

A stricter general definition of legalism is found in the Oxford English Dictionary: The principles of those who hold a theological position of adhering to the Law as opposed to the Gospel; the doctrine of Justification by Works, or teaching which savors of that doctrine.

Romans 4:4,5 states the case succinctly, "Now to him that works is the reward not reckoned of grace, but of debt; but to him that works not, but believes on Him that justifies the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness."



And Romans 11:6 is clear, "And if by grace, then is it no more of works: otherwise grace is no longer grace. But if it be of works, then is it no more grace: otherwise work is no more work."

Our human system of work and reward is like this: I work for you and you pay me. This is obviously legitimate, it's the way commerce works under divine institutions and free enterprise.

But the religious legalist is convinced that God works by the same system - or at least he hopes so. He says: I work for God and God rewards me by saving me and blessing me in some way.

That's not how God operates. He has no need or desire for our works; in fact, our works are offensive to Him. Isa. 64:6, "All our righteousnesses are as filthy rags..." If I try to impress God with my works, He discards them as filthy rags.

That's why we say that religious legalism, which tries to promote a works approach to God, is a "system that teaches that a person can do something to earn or merit salvation or blessing from God."

The word "legalism" also refers to any merit system which operates by works, by which a person tries to please God, or to assist God, or to glorify God by human power.

Religious legalism also refers to any system of religious bondage imposed on someone by another individual, or by an organization, that attempts to make that person a practitioner of legalism. Bullying tactics are often used: "Unless you accept our point of view, you are not one of us!" Ostracism is a very powerful persuader of novice Christians.

So, while it is not legalism to have high standards, it is legalism to try to impose those standards on others as a system of salvation or spirituality.

The word "grace" is used in the Bible to refer to all that God is free to do for mankind because of the Work that has already been performed for us by the Lord Jesus Christ on the Cross. Grace means that man has received from God that which he has not earned or deserved. Nothing that we are, and nothing that we can do, is enough to qualify us for anything that the Lord has to give us. In fact, our

works cause us to be arrogant in the presence of God, something He will not tolerate.

Read Romans 2:17-23, A Portrait of a Boaster

Read Romans 4:1-6, "But Not Before God..."

### Systems of Legalism

There are four principal spiritual transactions in which Works are not accepted by God: Salvation, Spirituality, Maturity, and Reward.

### Legalism in Salvation

There are many religious systems which teach salvation by works, or which try to mix works with faith, such as:

Believe + keep the Law of Moses

Believe + be circumcised

Believe + water baptism

Believe + confess your sins

Believe + give up your bad habits and fully surrender

Believe + make a public display or have great sorrow of a show of tears

Believe + church membership

But the Gospel is Believe plus Nothing!

### Legalism in Christian Living

Here are some types of religious legalism imposed on Christians:

Taboos: thinking one is spiritual because he abstains from certain things or follows a certain system of do's and don'ts.

Imitating Personalities: the idea that living the Christian life is conformity in dress, mannerisms, speech, etc., with those who seem spiritual.

Relative Righteousness: "your sins are worse than mine, therefore I am more spiritual" or "I am spiritual and you are carnal."

Ecstatics: spirituality by speaking in tongues, groaning, getting in a trance, fainting.

Asceticism: spirituality by self-sacrifice or extreme self denial; giving up normal activities or even necessities in the mistaken notion that God is impressed.

Ritual: idea that one is spiritual because he goes through various forms of ceremony or ritual. In the Apostle's day, the Jews promoted circumcision as necessary to the Christian walk. These days, baptism or one of the other sacraments is promoted as being necessary to salvation.

Confusing Means with Results: the idea that you are spiritual if you are faithful in praying, giving, witnessing, attending church, and so forth. But - these legitimate activities are a result of Christian growth and the filling of the Holy Spirit. They are not the means for spirituality or growth in Christ. It is important to distinguish this difference.

The Grace principle is this: when you are in fellowship, occupied with Christ, and controlled by the Holy Spirit, all of your activities bring eternal reward (gold, silver, precious stones). You are producing divine good, and the spiritual power for your efforts comes from God as a grace provision.

When you are out of fellowship (sin not confessed), you are occupied with yourself, you control yourself, everything is chaos. Even with your good works you are only producing human good (wood, hay, and stubble). There is no spiritual power supporting your efforts, and there is no reward for them in heaven.

Obedience to God's Word is not legalism. Remember the definition. Everything you do has the potential for reward in heaven, under the right circumstances.

But the legalist thinks that the good works he does for God will not only keep him in fellowship and walking with the Lord but will also make him more spiritual and a great Christian.

#### **Characteristics of the Weaker Brother - Romans 14**

[ Please read Romans chapter 14 before going through the discussion in this section. ]

Romans 14 has a splendid description of the characteristics of a legalistic person who is called the "weaker brother." This is a great passage about how to think grace toward someone who does something obnoxious or "unspiritual". Remember - we all have areas of weakness. You

may be the stronger believer in some of your areas of strength, and a weaker brother in areas of weakness. The idea in both cases is to avoid legalism and judgmentalism.

The strong believer in Romans 14 is mature, oriented to grace and the plan of God, occupied with Christ, and operates in fellowship most of the time under the power of the Holy Spirit.

The weaker brother is disoriented to grace, especially in the area of spirituality, and practices one or more forms of legalism. He is not comfortable unless he is judging the stronger believer in some gray area of behavior. The weaker brother has one or more of the following characteristics:

The weaker brother is strong on scruples but not well informed about doctrine or divine viewpoint.

The weaker brother operations on criteria of feelings, emotions, traditions, experiences, background, instead of Bible truth.

The weaker brother operates in the energy of the flesh, producing human good (wood, hay, stubble) which he thinks is divine good (gold, silver, precious stones).

The weaker brother is proud and critical of the strong believer, always judging him.

The weaker brother sticks his nose into the affairs of others by gossiping, maligning, and judging.

The weaker brother likes to set up a mold and try to squeeze everyone into it, so he is a bully.

The weaker brother has a guilt complex, so he is emotionally unstable; he is sensitive and demands attention; he is full of self-pity and lusts for approbation in his sin nature.

The weaker brother is jealous of others and tries to discredit them; he nit-picks and condemns the activities and projects of others.

Note: the weaker brother is weak because he resists Grace doctrines. He can recover quickly by confessing sin, being controlled by the Holy Spirit, and pursuing a program of intake of Bible truth which will make him spiritually strong.

### Illustration from Galatians

It is important that you read the entire Epistle to the Galatians prior to reading this outline review of legalism in the Galatian church. The sequence of events was:

1. The Galatian believers came under the influence of Judaistic legalism from the Circumcision crowd.
2. They took themselves out from under the Grace principle and put themselves under the Law.
3. They soon adopted a practice of observing the days, months, times, and years.
4. This influenced their appreciation of their teacher and turned the Apostle Paul into an "enemy."
5. Their growth process was stopped and Christ was not "formed in them", so they were not growing into maturity.
6. As a result of slowed growth and the absence of maturity, bonafide production (by means of the filling of the Holy Spirit) was curtailed, and their only production was a false production expressed as lusts of the flesh.
7. Along with this pseudo-production went many other factors:
  - The glory-seeking concept of 5:26
  - The practice of straightening everyone else out, 6:1
  - The concept of "weariness" with actual doctrinal spiritual production, 6:2-6
  - The program of "impressing others", peers, subordinates, or superiors, 6:11-13
  - The idea that man gets the glory, God is left out, the antithesis of Grace, 6:14,15

The principles to be derived from the example of the Galatian church are listed below:

1. Legalism is a result of a process of turning away from the truth. It is therefore deliberate (volitional). People deliberately choose legalism.
2. The type of legalism which a person follows is often be related to some kind of background

exposure, practice, or principle. A person's culture and upbringing will determine what type of religion he follows. Galatians deals with religious legalism which came out of Jewish law and practice.

3. Legalism always has a pseudo-content, "another gospel of a different kind". Gal. 1:6.
4. Once legalism begins to operate in a believer's life, he becomes suspicious of another person's motives, methods, message. Gal. 1:10-12.
5. A mature Christian who has been in a legalistic religion can spot legalism a mile off. Paul was at the top of Judaism before his conversion. Gal. 1:13,14.
6. Legalism sometimes uses techniques of infiltration, or spying, to gather information, while operating under a cloak of respectability. The legalist will bide his time until it suits his purpose to act. Gal. 2:1-4.
7. When legalists are met with truth, in terms of content and procedure, it crumbles and is unable to fulfill its objectives. Strong teaching keeps legalists from getting their campaigns launched. Gal. 2:5-9.
8. When legalists lose a battle on one front, they will regroup and form another base of operations on another front. When legalists cannot get a grasp on a person when he is in the company of strong believers, they will concentrate on him when he is standing alone.
9. Legalism is often seen in leadership before it is seen in the congregation. And when a leader gets involved in legalism, he influences others to go with him. This happens often when a project is going sour and the leader is desperate for support. Example: when there is financial trouble, there is a great temptation to get away from principles of grace giving.
10. The content of legalism is often something that has a bonafide function in some other context. In the Galatian churches, legalism was a distortion of the Law. The Law has a real and bonafide function, "to bring us to Christ", and legalism distorted it. Other examples: legalism takes the doctrine of

Separation and makes it the doctrine of spirituality; it takes the doctrine of Baptism and makes it the doctrine of church membership.

The term "bondage" in Gal. 5:1 means "the slavery to the principles and ways of regular human living." This is not the idea of degraded lasciviousness or debauchery. The Law was bonafide; circumcision was bonafide. But these were distorted by legalists to that they became the master of the person instead of his tools.

11. The legalistic person has been "bewitched." This terms means "to have evil brought upon you by vain praise." Legalism appeals to a person's lust for approbation and tries to drag him into legalism to satisfy it. Gal. 3:1-3.

The person in legalism is described as "foolish", meaning "not understanding." Legalism is one of the greatest robbers of Christian benefits; it robs people of their

understanding of the Word of God and all of the benefits of the Grace life.

12. The legalist does not learn from experience. He has great tenacity; and despite many failures and vain strivings, he still can't see his error. He sees his programs not working, so he has to go from one thing to the next, always looking for something better, never satisfied, and never satisfying others. Gal. 3:4.
13. The very thing that the legalist puts himself under is that which rises up to smite him. When a Christian puts himself under the taboos of others, he can't measure up. So he puts himself under a church organization, and he still can't measure up. The very system that he embraces proves him to be deficient by always presenting a moving target. Grace is the only system which does not magnify the believer's deficiencies.

Grace to you, and peace...