

## **Legalism & Worldliness/Sin – From the view of the Bible and not from the view of modern teachings**

**Legalism** – this word is not in the Bible (as far as I know) but the concept is there (just not in the manner that it is generally taught today). Legalism in the Bible is a counterfeit gospel (i.e. Galatians 1 & 2). That is, to teach that a person is justified (or saved) by any law-keeping at all that is added to faith (Gal 2:16). This type of teaching is heretical and falls under a curse. (Gal1:8-9). However, sanctification is a different concept. The word means to be “set apart” or to be “made holy”. We are to be set apart from what? From the world and to God. We are literally saved from sin and the world to serve God – for His purposes. This is very important because the Bible says “without sanctification no one will see the Lord” (Hebrews 12:14). I must mention here that Christ is our sanctification, immediately, when we are saved: “But by His doing you are in Christ Jesus, who became to us wisdom from God, and righteousness and sanctification, and redemption” (1Corinthians 1:30). There is, however, a real lived-out holy life that will demonstrate that these things are true in every believer: “but like the Holy One who called you, be holy yourselves also in all *your* behavior; because it is written, “YOU SHALL BE HOLY, FOR I AM HOLY” (1 Peter 1:15-16).

**The Bible teaching on worldliness** – The Bible teaches in the most extreme degree of the importance of separation from the world. Most churches today teach almost nothing about this topic. (This fact is extremely grievous to me.) From the book of Galatians, one of the most cutting and serious statements on separation is made. Galatians 6:14 says, “But may it never be that I would boast except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, through which the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world”. I find it ironic that the book people most frequently use to declare “separation from worldly activity in the Christian life is legalism” has such a cutting and decisive statement about the matter. If you take Paul seriously, we should have no part in this world, no pleasure from the things that crucified Christ. Enjoying these things is a very bad sign for a person:

<sup>14</sup>Do not be bound together with unbelievers; for what partnership have righteousness and lawlessness, or what fellowship has light with darkness? <sup>15</sup>Or what harmony has Christ with Belial, or what has a believer in common with an unbeliever? <sup>16</sup>Or what agreement has the temple of God with idols? For we are the temple of the living God; just as God said, “I WILL DWELL IN THEM AND WALK AMONG THEM; AND I WILL BE THEIR GOD, AND THEY SHALL BE MY PEOPLE.

<sup>17</sup>“Therefore, COME OUT FROM THEIR MIDST AND BE SEPARATE,” says the Lord. “AND DO NOT TOUCH WHAT IS UNCLEAN; And I will welcome you. <sup>18</sup>“And I will be a father to you, And you shall be sons and daughters to Me,” Says the Lord Almighty. <sup>1</sup>Therefore, having these promises, beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all defilement of flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God. (2 Corinthians 6:14-7:1)

What you do says EVERYTHING about which Kingdom you’re in. We are commanded not even to touch unclean worldly things, let alone have portions of our life committed to them. Are you doing pretty much the same things as your lost neighbors (maybe on a bit higher moral plane but nevertheless, basically the same activities)? Doing worldly things is harlotry and idolatry and should not be acceptable for Christians. Unfortunately, these things are considered normal for Christians. I think most people have no idea how clear the Bible is about this issue – either because they don’t read the Bible or because they are viewing what they read through the lens of the culture and the professing Christians around them. This is extremely dangerous, especially since most professing Christians aren’t saved: <sup>21</sup>“Not everyone who says to Me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ will enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father who is in heaven *will enter*. <sup>22</sup>Many will say to Me on that day, ‘Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in Your name, and in Your name cast out demons, and in Your name perform many miracles?’ <sup>23</sup>And then I will declare to them, ‘I never knew you; DEPART FROM ME, YOU WHO PRACTICE LAWLESSNESS.’ (Matthew 7:21-23). I admonish you to consider this carefully because most people are wrong, so it is likely that you are wrong. Do you still enjoy the entertainment of the world? the movies? the music? the fashion? the money? the sports? the television? the impure humor? parties? gambling? The list goes on and on about what trinkets the Devil uses to ensnare people and keep them deceived, so they will not turn to Christ in truth. Consider this verse “Do not love the world nor the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him” (1 John 2:15). Yes, the Bible is that clear on the matter! If you love the world you are not a Christian: you are still an idolater and you need to repent. I would ask you to think carefully about one full entire week in your life – is your attention (thoughts and actions) set more on Christ and things above rather than things down here that are not eternal: “Therefore if you have been raised up with Christ, keep seeking the things above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. <sup>2</sup>Set your mind on the things above, not on the things that are on earth. <sup>3</sup>For you have died and your life is hidden with Christ in God” (Colossians 3:1-3).

I know you're probably thinking what about all the scriptures that say "just believe and you'll be saved". Jesus said in John 10:35 "And the scripture cannot be broken", so the same Bible that says "believe" to be saved also says these hard things to every person. Both are equally true. "Little children, make sure no one deceives you; the one who practices righteousness is righteous, just as He is righteous; the one who practices sin is of the devil" (1 John 3:7-8a). I say to you now, do not be deceived; most will be. You only have one life to live, one soul – turn from the world and your own way and follow Christ giving Him all you have: So then, none of you can be My disciple who does not give up all his own possessions" (Luke 14:33); But Jesus said to him, "No one, after putting his hand to the plow and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God" (Luke 9:62); "Remember Lot's wife" (Luke 17:32). All Christians are called to get free from all worldly things; not to "maintain a healthy relationship with them" – the Bible speaks of no such thing. "Therefore, since we have so great a cloud of witnesses surrounding us, let us also lay aside every encumbrance and the sin which so easily entangles us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us," (Hebrews 12:1). We are in a race and worldly things will only serve as stumbling blocks. They are a hindrance not a help. "You adulteresses, do you not know that friendship with the world is hostility toward God? Therefore whoever wishes to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God" (James 4:4). These things are battling against our souls, we are not to compromise with them. "Beloved, I urge you as aliens and strangers to abstain from fleshly lusts which wage war against the soul" (1 Peter 2:11). "Fleshly lusts" are not just sexual things, but worldly pleasures. "You ask and do not receive, because you ask with wrong motives, so that you may spend *it* on your pleasures" (James 4:3); "For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh and the lust of the eyes and the boastful pride of life, is not from the Father, but is from the world" (1 John 2:15). According to the parable of the sower, the things that cause a person to be "choked out" are: worry of the world, deceitfulness of wealth, riches, pleasures of this life, and other things. Furthermore, we are commanded to not be conformed to the world but be transformed by the renewing of our minds (Romans 12:1). A person becomes conformed to the world merely by spending time in it and, on the contrary, he becomes transformed by the renewing of his mind by reading and doing what is in the Word. Which will you give way to? Remember, a little compromise leads to more and we have a tendency to deceive ourselves.

### **The New Birth & the Believer's New Relationship with the World –**

**For the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation to all men, instructing us to deny ungodliness and worldly desires and to live sensibly, righteously and godly in the present age, Titus 2:11-12**

Please be honest for your own good because it takes the new birth to make this a reality. When God saves someone, He saves him in power and that person is extremely different. In Romans 6, a chapter describing the spiritual reality of regeneration the words 'die', 'dead', or 'death' are employed by the Holy Spirit numerous times. The believer who is born again is dead to sin, and even dead to their previous life. The believer is really and truly dead. They have a brand new life where they are set free from the worldliness and sin and even their own selfish life to serve God. What ever happened to the reality of the new birth and the brand new POWERFUL life we have in Christ? What a dead powerless salvation that is preached nowadays. "holding to a form of godliness, although they have denied its power; Avoid such men as these" (2 Timothy 3:5). Religion can never replace regeneration: they just don't look the same. There are many people who are religious and are very involved in religious activities, but are not born again. I think this is a description of most people in the evangelical protestant churches. Truthfully, the call of the gospel is to die; not to repeat the sinner's prayer, ask Jesus into your heart, accept Jesus, come to church or any number of false messages that are not in the Bible. Jesus said "He who has found his life will lose it, and he who has lost his life for My sake will find it" (Mathew 10:38-39). This is what saving faith looks like in anyone who is saved (that person's life has been given up for the sake of Jesus Christ); they are dead to their agenda, they are dead to their entertainment, they are dead to their job, home, money, social life, family, relationships etc. Any response to the gospel short of this is, simply put, not a saving response. The Holy Spirit is powerful and when He makes you a new creature it impacts every aspect of your life: Therefore, if anyone *is* in Christ, *he is* a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new (2 Corinthians 5:17). Is this true for you? It's a heaven or hell difference.