



## Legalism

Legalism is any system of bondage incurred upon a person, involuntarily by position, involuntarily by the will of another, or voluntarily by the person themselves so designed to eventually destroy them. The effect of legalism or the system of bondage will ultimately break the spirit of the person. Prov. 18:14; Prov. 15:13; Prov. 12:25; Prov. 17:22.

*“The spirit of a man can endure his sickness, But as for a broken spirit who can bear it?” (Proverbs 18:14, NASB)*

*“A joyful heart makes a cheerful face, But when the heart is sad, the spirit is broken.” (Proverbs 15:13, NASB)*

*“Anxiety in a man's heart weighs it down, But a good word makes it glad.” (Proverbs 12:25, NASB)*

*“A joyful heart is good medicine, But a broken spirit dries up the bones.” (Proverbs 17:22, NASB)*

### Systems of Legalism

Taboos are thinking one is spiritual because you don't do certain things. The believer is filled with the Holy Spirit by proper confession or citing of known sins to God the Father resulting in the filling of the Holy Spirit. Taboos may be kept while in fellowship, but are a result, not the means of the filling of the Holy Spirit.

Spirituality by imitation of others' personalities, mannerisms, how they speak, etc. is not bona fide. Spirituality by relativity is where you think others sins are worse than yours, therefore you are more spiritual. You are either 100% spiritual because you are filled with the Holy Spirit or you are 100% carnal and controlled by your old sin nature. Spirituality and carnality are mutually exclusive absolutes. There are no gray areas here.

Spirituality by ecstasies is not bona fide. This is speaking in tongues, groaning, swooning, getting in a trance and are all pseudo-spirituality. Spirituality by asceticism or self-sacrifice is not bona fide. When a believer tries to give up normal activities and necessities of life in order to please or impress the Lord, this is extreme self-denial. This is not the means of the filling of the Holy Spirit. The only true means is applying 1 John 1:9.

*“If we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.” (1 John 1:9, NASB)*

Spirituality by ritual is not bona fide. This is the belief that you are spiritual because you go through various forms of ritual. The Jews used circumcision. Today, baptism is used or the sacraments. These attempts to achieve spirituality by anything other than confessing known sins to God the Father and the resulting filling of the Holy Spirit are not bona fide. These people are confusing the means with the results.

You are not in a state of spirituality just because you pray, give, witness and so on. All of these activities, when done in the power of the filling of the Holy Spirit, are the result of the Holy Spirit's control and are called divine good. The filling of the Holy Spirit must come first in order for these activities to be divine good.

Crucifixion of self is a misunderstanding of Romans 6. This is trying to make retroactive positional truth



a continual experience. You cannot get rid of self. Self does not cancel out self. You are in Christ and have an awareness of existence. This is a vital doctrine and must be understood or gimmicks will abound. See the category on [Spirituality](#).

## Positional Legalism

Positional legalism is expressed in the Scripture in many different phases. Positional legalism is a system of bondage that one is born into as a member of the human race, to which one did not voluntarily enter by an act of their own will. There are many aspects of positional legalism.

The present evil world system of legalism is one aspect of positional legalism. The world system of bondage includes a system of education, philosophy, materialism, social status, security and preservation, political pressure, and many others. Gal. 1:1-5.

*“Paul, an apostle (not sent from men nor through the agency of man, but through Jesus Christ and God the Father, who raised Him from the dead), and all the brethren who are with me, To the churches of Galatia: Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ, who gave Himself for our sins so that He might rescue us from this present evil age, according to the will of our God and Father, to whom be the glory forevermore. Amen.” (Galatians 1:1-5, NASB)*

Another aspect of positional legalism is the powers of darkness system of legalism. This is the system of bondage superimposed on the human race by the angelic system of fallen angels called the Angelic Conflict. It is called the “domain of darkness” in Colossians 1:12-13.

*“giving thanks to the Father, who has qualified us to share in the inheritance of the saints in Light. For He rescued us from the domain of darkness, and transferred us to the kingdom of His beloved Son,” (Colossians 1:12-13, NASB)*

The power of the old sin nature is another aspect of positional legalism. This is a built-in positional system in all individuals who enter the human race. This system also has many parts working together as a whole to control and destroy the person including the area of strength, the area of weakness, the trends, and the lust patterns. Although some of these when looked at singularly do not appear as what is generally termed as legalism, they do belong to a built-in system of legalism, system of bondage, the old sin nature, and do their part to control and destroy you. Rom. 6:6-12; Rom. 7:24.

*“knowing this, that our old self was crucified with Him, in order that our body of sin might be done away with, so that we would no longer be slaves to sin; for he who has died is freed from sin. Now if we have died with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with Him, knowing that Christ, having been raised from the dead, is never to die again; death no longer is master over Him. For the death that He died, He died to sin once for all; but the life that He lives, He lives to God. Even so consider yourselves to be dead to sin, but alive to God in Christ Jesus. Therefore do not let sin reign in your mortal body so that you obey its lusts,” (Romans 6:6-12, NASB)*

*“Wretched man that I am! Who will set me free from the body of this death?” (Romans 7:24, NASB)*

The bondage of corruption of the human body is another aspect of positional legalism. Here we see that all people are born into the human race and as Romans 8:20 states, are “subjected to futility.” We are all subject to a system of laws which govern the body. These include a system of laws and the bondage of corruption of the body. Rom. 8:18-23.

*“For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory that is to be revealed to us. For the anxious longing of the creation waits eagerly for the revealing of the*



*sons of God. For the creation was subjected to futility, not willingly, but because of Him who subjected it, in hope that the creation itself also will be set free from its slavery to corruption into the freedom of the glory of the children of God. For we know that the whole creation groans and suffers the pains of childbirth together until now. And not only this, but also we ourselves, having the first fruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting eagerly for our adoption as sons, the redemption of our body.” (Romans 8:18-23, NASB)*

We have physical abilities, but also limitations. We have mental abilities but also mental limitations. We have endurance capacities, but also endurance limitations. We have time-space limitations. We have psychological and emotional limitations. We have personality and disposition patterns and practices. Our bodies are subject to disease, decay, defects, temporary ills, permanent damage, recovery, and many other details.

The bondage of corruption of the body is described in 1 Corinthians 15:35-38. It is said to be a body that is perishable, a body of dishonor, weakness, and a natural body in 1 Corinthians 15:41-44.

*“But someone will say, “How are the dead raised? And with what kind of body do they come?” You fool! That which you sow does not come to life unless it dies; and that which you sow, you do not sow the body which is to be, but a bare grain, perhaps of wheat or of something else. But God gives it a body just as He wished, and to each of the seeds a body of its own.” (1 Corinthians 15:35-38, NASB)*

*“There is one glory of the sun, and another glory of the moon, and another glory of the stars; for star differs from star in glory. So also is the resurrection of the dead. It is sown a perishable body, it is raised an imperishable body; it is sown in dishonor, it is raised in glory; it is sown in weakness, it is raised in power; it is sown a natural body, it is raised a spiritual body. If there is a natural body, there is also a spiritual body.” (1 Corinthians 15:41-44, NASB)*

It is said to be “earthly” in 1 Corinthians 15:47, to bear the “image of the earthy” in 1 Corinthians 15:49, and “mortal” in 1 Corinthians 15:54.

*“The first man is from the earth, earthy; the second man is from heaven.” (1 Corinthians 15:47, NASB)*

*“Just as we have borne the image of the earthy, we will also bear the image of the heavenly.” (1 Corinthians 15:49, NASB)*

*“But when this perishable will have put on the imperishable, and this mortal will have put on immortality, then will come about the saying that is written, “DEATH IS SWALLOWED UP in victory.” (1 Corinthians 15:54, NASB)*

In conclusion, to understand positional legalism, we may say that God has provided a solution to positional legalism of the present world system – our position in Christ. Legalism of the kingdom of darkness is placed in the kingdom of light. Legalism of the old sin nature changes to indwelling of the Spirit. Gal. 1:4; Col. 1:12-13; Rom. 8:2.

*“who gave Himself for our sins so that He might rescue us from this present evil age, according to the will of our God and Father,” (Galatians 1:4, NASB)*

*“giving thanks to the Father, who has qualified us to share in the inheritance of the saints in Light. For He rescued us from the domain of darkness, and transferred us to the kingdom of His beloved Son,” (Colossians 1:12-13, NASB)*

*“For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has set you free from the law of sin and of death.” (Romans 8:2, NASB)*



Believers and often doctrinal types more easily succumb to the pressure of positional legalism than they do to other expressions of legalism. For example, failure to master the details of life is really a failure to break the hold of the present world system. Failure to have a relaxed mental attitude is really failure to understand that the Angelic Conflict has been defeated by our Lord's work on the Cross and His resurrection from the dead. Failure to live a life in consistent fellowship with God is really failure to realize the solution of the indwelling of the Spirit and the enabling power of the filling of the Spirit. Failure to live a life directed by the principles of the Word of God is really failure to recognize that God has made provisions to overcome the corruption of the body.

You may have what others call defects. So you have disease, a poor background, inability to study, a dull personality, or no natural charm. All these, if you allow them to dictate the manner and plan of your life, are a system of bondage that calls the shots. Does your health call the shots? Does your occupation call the shots? Does your personality call the shots? Who calls the shots in your life? Whatever calls the shots in your life, to that system you are in bondage. Rom. 5:13.

*"for until the Law sin was in the world, but sin is not imputed when there is no law." (Romans 5:13, NASB)*

The present evil world system of legalism is amplified in the practice of impressing others. The world system dictates that if you do not impress others or be compatible or diplomatic or congenial, then you won't be able to get ahead. You must shine their shoes to get yours shined. Gal. 1:10; Matt. 23:1-12.

*"For am I now seeking the favor of men, or of God? Or am I striving to please men? If I were still trying to please men, I would not be a bond-servant of Christ." (Galatians 1:10, NASB)*

*"therefore all that they tell you, do and observe, but do not do according to their deeds; for they say things and do not do them. They tie up heavy burdens and lay them on men's shoulders, but they themselves are unwilling to move them with so much as a finger." (Matthew 23:3-4, NASB)*

*"But they do all their deeds to be noticed by men; for they broaden their phylacteries and lengthen the tassels of their garments. They love the place of honor at banquets and the chief seats in the synagogues, and respectful greetings in the market places, and being called Rabbi by men." (Matthew 23:5-7, NASB)*

The present evil world system of legalism is amplified in the practice of documenting with accepted authorities. Using a few of today's examples used in commercials, a certain toothpaste is used by a movie star who has sex appeal, a cigarette is smoked by a winning race car driver, and a certain car is driven by the middle class – Mr. Joe Average. Gal. 1:11-17.

*"For I would have you know, brethren, that the gospel which was preached by me is not according to man. For I neither received it from man, nor was I taught it, but I received it through a revelation of Jesus Christ." (Galatians 1:11-12, NASB)*

*"But when God, who had set me apart even from my mother's womb and called me through His grace, was pleased" (Galatians 1:15, NASB)*

The present evil world system of legalism is amplified in the practice of bolstering your own position or getting those on your side to verify your credibility. Gal. 1:17-24.

*"Then three years later I went up to Jerusalem to become acquainted with Cephas, and stayed with him fifteen days. But I did not see any other of the apostles except James, the Lord's brother." (Galatians 1:18-19, NASB)*



*"Then I went into the regions of Syria and Cilicia. I was still unknown by sight to the churches of Judea which were in Christ;" (Galatians 1:21-22, NASB)*

*"but only, they kept hearing, "He who once persecuted us is now preaching the faith which he once tried to destroy." And they were glorifying God because of me." (Galatians 1:23-24, NASB)*

## **Religious Legalism**

Religious legalism is one of two types of involuntary legalism which is legalism superimposed upon you by someone else. There are many characteristics of religious legalism. It is burdensome, impressive, prestigious and it generates false respect. Gal. 2:1-21; Matt. 15:1-12; Matt. 23:4-7.

*"They tie up heavy burdens and lay them on men's shoulders, but they themselves are unwilling to move them with so much as a finger. "But they do all their deeds to be noticed by men; for they broaden their phylacteries and lengthen the tassels of their garments. "They love the place of honor at banquets and the chief seats in the synagogues, and respectful greetings in the market places, and being called Rabbi by men." (Matthew 23:4-7, NASB)*

Religious legalism is restrictive, unscrupulous, and extensive. Matt. 23:13-15.

*"But woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites, because you shut off the kingdom of heaven from people; for you do not enter in yourselves, nor do you allow those who are entering to go in. ["Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites, because you devour widows' houses, and for a pretense you make long prayers; therefore you will receive greater condemnation.] "Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites, because you travel around on sea and land to make one proselyte; and when he becomes one, you make him twice as much a son of hell as yourselves." (Matthew 23:13-15, NASB)*

Religious legalism is blind and foolish. Matt. 23:16-21.

*"Woe to you, blind guides, who say, 'Whoever swears by the temple, that is nothing; but whoever swears by the gold of the temple is obligated.' "You fools and blind men! Which is more important, the gold or the temple that sanctified the gold? "And, 'Whoever swears by the altar, that is nothing, but whoever swears by the offering on it, he is obligated.' "You blind men, which is more important, the offering, or the altar that sanctifies the offering? "Therefore, whoever swears by the altar, swears both by the altar and by everything on it. "And whoever swears by the temple, swears both by the temple and by Him who dwells within it." (Matthew 23:16-21, NASB)*

Religious legalism is superficial. Matt. 23:23-24.

*"Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you tithe mint and dill and cummin, and have neglected the weightier provisions of the law: justice and mercy and faithfulness; but these are the things you should have done without neglecting the others. "You blind guides, who strain out a gnat and swallow a camel!" (Matthew 23:23-24, NASB)*

Religious legalism is a con game. Matt. 23:25-28.

*"Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you clean the outside of the cup and of the dish, but inside they are full of robbery and self-indulgence. "You blind Pharisee, first clean the inside of the cup and of the dish, so that the outside of it may become clean also. "Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you are like whitewashed tombs which on the outside appear beautiful, but inside they are full of dead men's bones and all uncleanness. "So you, too, outwardly appear righteous to men, but inwardly you are full of hypocrisy and lawlessness." (Matthew 23:25-28, NASB)*





Religious legalism is destructive. Matt. 23:29-32.

*"Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you build the tombs of the prophets and adorn the monuments of the righteous, and say, 'If we had been living in the days of our fathers, we would not have been partners with them in shedding the blood of the prophets.' So you testify against yourselves, that you are sons of those who murdered the prophets. Fill up, then, the measure of the guilt of your fathers." (Matthew 23:29-32, NASB)*

Religious legalism is condemned. Matt. 23:33-36.

*"You serpents, you brood of vipers, how will you escape the sentence of hell? Therefore, behold, I am sending you prophets and wise men and scribes; some of them you will kill and crucify, and some of them you will scourge in your synagogues, and persecute from city to city, so that upon you may fall the guilt of all the righteous blood shed on earth, from the blood of righteous Abel to the blood of Zechariah, the son of Berechiah, whom you murdered between the temple and the altar. Truly I say to you, all these things will come upon this generation." (Matthew 23:33-36, NASB)*

Religious legalism is secretive and devious. Gal. 2:4.

*"But it was because of the false brethren secretly brought in, who had sneaked in to spy out our liberty which we have in Christ Jesus, in order to bring us into bondage." (Galatians 2:4, NASB)*

Religious legalism is accepted by believers just as Peter was accepted in Galatians 2:7-14.

*"But on the contrary, seeing that I had been entrusted with the gospel to the uncircumcised, just as Peter had been to the circumcised" (Galatians 2:7, NASB)*

*"But when I saw that they were not straightforward about the truth of the gospel, I said to Cephas in the presence of all, 'If you, being a Jew, live like the Gentiles and not like the Jews, how is it that you compel the Gentiles to live like Jews?' (Galatians 2:14, NASB)*

Religious legalism has a false system of self-appraisal. Rom. 2:7-14.

*"to those who by perseverance in doing good seek for glory and honor and immortality, eternal life; but to those who are selfishly ambitious and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness, wrath and indignation. There will be tribulation and distress for every soul of man who does evil, of the Jew first and also of the Greek, but glory and honor and peace to everyone who does good, to the Jew first and also to the Greek. For there is no partiality with God. For all who have sinned without the Law will also perish without the Law, and all who have sinned under the Law will be judged by the Law; for it is not the hearers of the Law who are just before God, but the doers of the Law will be justified. For when Gentiles who do not have the Law do instinctively the things of the Law, these, not having the Law, are a law to themselves," (Romans 2:7-14, NASB)*

They rest heavily on reputation. In Romans 2:17, "bear the name Jew" is the present middle indicative of ἐπονομάζω (eponomazō) and means to name. They had named themselves Jews. This is recognition by organized title.

*"But if you bear the name 'Jew' and rely upon the Law and boast in God," (Romans 2:17, NASB)*

They rest heavily on their training. "Rely upon the Law" is the present middle indicative of ἐπαναπαύομαι (epanapauomai) and means to rest upon their own credentials of learning. They embraced the deeper life concept of God. "Boast of God" is the present middle indicative of καυχάομαι (kauchaomai) and means to boast of intimacy with God, receive His personal special favor. "When



brother Charlie prays, he always gets answers to prayer. He truly is a man of God.”

They embrace the security of having God’s will on a matter. In Romans 2:18, “know His will” is γινώσκω (ginōskō) and means to know and understand God’s will. “I know God’s will, I prayed about it, and now I’m sure.”

*“and know His will and approve the things that are essential, being instructed out of the Law,” (Romans 2:18, NASB)*

They rest heavily on experience. “Approve” is δοκιμάζω (dokimazō) and means to test and prove upon examination. This means to weigh all the sides and come up with the best answer. This is the checking out of someone against all other views. “I’ve checked him out,” or “I’ve checked it out and what I am doing is best.”

They rest heavily upon their attendance to Bible preaching and teaching. In Romans 2:18, “being instructed out of the Law” is the present passive participle of κατηχέω (katēcheō) and means to instruct in the oral teaching of the Law. This is observed in typical phrases such as, “Oh, yes, I’ve heard the best preachers that the world has known,” or “I haven’t missed a Sunday or sermon, or failed to read all the great books. I’m up on all the great Bible teaching of the present hour.”

They have a pseudo confidence of their ministry. This is indicated by the present passive infinitive in Romans 2:19 of the absolute verb εἶναι (einai) and means “to be.” “Confident” is πείθω (peithō) and means that it is their conviction that God has cut them out to be guides to the blind, light to those in darkness, and instructors of the foolish as well as a teacher of babes. It is a perfect active indicative followed by a reflexive pronoun, yourselves. They had persuaded themselves that they were these things.

*“and are confident that you yourself are a guide to the blind, a light to those who are in darkness,” (Romans 2:19, NASB)*

Religious legalism has a false system of human evaluation. It is impressed by outward appearance. James 2:1-2.

*“My brethren, do not hold your faith in our glorious Lord Jesus Christ with an attitude of personal favoritism. For if a man comes into your assembly with a gold ring and dressed in fine clothes, and there also comes in a poor man in dirty clothes,” (James 2:1-2, NASB)*

Religious legalism is duped to embrace those that cause it problems. James 2:4-6.

*“have you not made distinctions among yourselves, and become judges with evil motives? Listen, my beloved brethren: did not God choose the poor of this world to be rich in faith and heirs of the kingdom which He promised to those who love Him? But you have dishonored the poor man. Is it not the rich who oppress you and personally drag you into court?” (James 2:4-6, NASB)*

Religious legalism is impressed by those of great ministry stature. James 2:1; 1 Tim. 1:7-9.

*“My brethren, do not hold your faith in our glorious Lord Jesus Christ with an attitude of personal favoritism.” (James 2:1, NASB)*

*“wanting to be teachers of the Law, even though they do not understand either what they are saying or the matters about which they make confident assertions. But we know that the Law is good, if one uses it lawfully, realizing the fact that law is not made for a righteous person, but for those who are lawless and rebellious, for the ungodly and sinners, for the unholy and profane, for those who kill their fathers*



*or mothers, for murderers” (1 Timothy 1:7-9, NASB)*

Religious legalism has a false system of production. The production of legalism turns people from God's truth. The production of legalism thrives on the “sacrifice” principle which often cleans innocent, well-meaning people, of their livelihoods. It preys on the unprotected. Matt. 23:13.

*“But woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites, because you shut off the kingdom of heaven from people; for you do not enter in yourselves, nor do you allow those who are entering to go in.” (Matthew 23:13, NASB)*

The production of legalism expresses itself in open shows of false sincerity. Matt. 23:14; Matt. 6:2.

*“[“Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites, because you devour widows' houses, and for a pretense you make long prayers; therefore you will receive greater condemnation.”]” (Matthew 23:14, NASB)*

*“So when you give to the poor, do not sound a trumpet before you, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets, so that they may be honored by men. Truly I say to you, they have their reward in full.” (Matthew 6:2, NASB)*

The production of legalism is not without an extensive outreach and penetration ministry. They encompass land and sea with no limit to which they will go to meet their ends. Matt. 23:15.

*“Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites, because you travel around on sea and land to make one proselyte; and when he becomes one, you make him twice as much a son of hell as yourselves.” (Matthew 23:15, NASB)*

The production of legalism depends heavily upon a program of giving to sustain their ministry. This is the annuity concept, the grant, the matching of dollar per dollar, tithing. The production of legalism is very attractive in all of its statistics, but when its real quality is tested, it comes up a “grave” of dead men's bones. Matt. 23:16-23; Matt. 23:28.

*“Woe to you, blind guides, who say, 'Whoever swears by the temple, that is nothing; but whoever swears by the gold of the temple is obligated.' "You fools and blind men! Which is more important, the gold or the temple that sanctified the gold?" (Matthew 23:16-17, NASB)*

*“Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you tithe mint and dill and cummin, and have neglected the weightier provisions of the law: justice and mercy and faithfulness; but these are the things you should have done without neglecting the others.” (Matthew 23:23, NASB)*

*“So you, too, outwardly appear righteous to men, but inwardly you are full of hypocrisy and lawlessness.” (Matthew 23:28, NASB)*

The production of legalism always has its purging element, that ministry of ridding Christianity of its “heretics.” These are the religious head hunters who give time to spying out someone else for the purpose of destroying him. Matt. 23:29-33.

*“Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you build the tombs of the prophets and adorn the monuments of the righteous, and say, 'If we had been living in the days of our fathers, we would not have been partners with them in shedding the blood of the prophets.' "So you testify against yourselves, that you are sons of those who murdered the prophets. "Fill up, then, the measure of the guilt of your fathers. "You serpents, you brood of vipers, how will you escape the sentence of hell?" (Matthew 23:29-33, NASB)*





It is a system of perversion of true doctrine and a perversion of the Gospel. Gal. 1:6-9.

*"I am amazed that you are so quickly deserting Him who called you by the grace of Christ, for a different gospel; which is really not another; only there are some who are disturbing you and want to distort the gospel of Christ. But even if we, or an angel from heaven, should preach to you a gospel contrary to what we have preached to you, he is to be accursed! As we have said before, so I say again now, if any man is preaching to you a gospel contrary to what you received, he is to be accursed!" (Galatians 1:6-9, NASB)*

It is a perversion of sound doctrine. 2 Peter 2:1-3.

*"But false prophets also arose among the people, just as there will also be false teachers among you, who will secretly introduce destructive heresies, even denying the Master who bought them, bringing swift destruction upon themselves. Many will follow their sensuality, and because of them the way of the truth will be maligned; and in their greed they will exploit you with false words; their judgment from long ago is not idle, and their destruction is not asleep." (2 Peter 2:1-3, NASB)*

It is a perversion of the truth of the Law. Rom. 2:21-29.

*"you, therefore, who teach another, do you not teach yourself? You who preach that one shall not steal, do you steal?" (Romans 2:21, NASB)*

*"For 'THE NAME OF GOD IS BLASPHEMED AMONG THE GENTILES BECAUSE OF YOU,' just as it is written. For indeed circumcision is of value if you practice the Law; but if you are a transgressor of the Law, your circumcision has become uncircumcision." (Romans 2:24-25, NASB)*

*"But he is a Jew who is one inwardly; and circumcision is that which is of the heart, by the Spirit, not by the letter; and his praise is not from men, but from God." (Romans 2:29, NASB)*

It is a perversion of the interpretation and application of the truth of the Law. Matt. 5:17.

*"Do not think that I came to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I did not come to abolish but to fulfill." (Matthew 5:17, NASB)*

The perversions of the religious legalists cause others to be turned away and caused Gentiles to blaspheme. Rom. 2:24.

*"For 'THE NAME OF GOD IS BLASPHEMED AMONG THE GENTILES BECAUSE OF YOU,' just as it is written." (Romans 2:24, NASB)*

The perversions of the religious legalists caused Peter to become legalistic. Gal. 2:12.

*"For prior to the coming of certain men from James, he used to eat with the Gentiles; but when they came, he began to withdraw and hold himself aloof, fearing the party of the circumcision." (Galatians 2:12, NASB)*

The perversions of the religious legalists caused others to turn from the truth. 2 Peter 2:1-3.

*"But false prophets also arose among the people, just as there will also be false teachers among you, who will secretly introduce destructive heresies, even denying the Master who bought them, bringing swift destruction upon themselves. Many will follow their sensuality, and because of them the way of the truth will be maligned; and in their greed they will exploit you with false words; their judgment from long ago is not idle, and their destruction is not asleep." (2 Peter 2:1-3, NASB)*

The perversions of the religious legalists caused people to become displaced into another false system of



belief such as tradition, emotionalism, and rationalism. 1 Tim. 1:6-7.

*"For some men, straying from these things, have turned aside to fruitless discussion, wanting to be teachers of the Law, even though they do not understand either what they are saying or the matters about which they make confident assertions." (1 Timothy 1:6-7, NASB)*

Religious legalism is offended and indignant at expressions of grace and Christian liberty. Examples are the healing of a woman as a production of grace in Luke 13:10-17 and salvation of a man as a production of grace in Luke 5:21.

*"But the Lord answered him and said, 'You hypocrites, does not each of you on the Sabbath untie his ox or his donkey from the stall and lead him away to water him? 'And this woman, a daughter of Abraham as she is, whom Satan has bound for eighteen long years, should she not have been released from this bond on the Sabbath day?'" (Luke 13:15-16, NASB)*

*"The scribes and the Pharisees began to reason, saying, 'Who is this man who speaks blasphemies? Who can forgive sins, but God alone?'" (Luke 5:21, NASB)*

Religious legalism was offended and indignant at the company kept by the Lord. Luke 5:30-31.

*"The Pharisees and their scribes began grumbling at His disciples, saying, 'Why do you eat and drink with the tax collectors and sinners?' And Jesus answered and said to them, 'It is not those who are well who need a physician, but those who are sick.'" (Luke 5:30-31, NASB)*

Religious legalism is offended and indignant at the conduct of His disciples. Luke 5:33-35.

*"And they said to Him, 'The disciples of John often fast and offer prayers, the disciples of the Pharisees also do the same, but Yours eat and drink.' And Jesus said to them, 'You cannot make the attendants of the bridegroom fast while the bridegroom is with them, can you? 'But the days will come; and when the bridegroom is taken away from them, then they will fast in those days.'" (Luke 5:33-35, NASB)*

### **Social Legalism**

Social legalism is one of two types of involuntary legalism which is legalism superimposed upon you by someone else. Social legalism includes how you dress, what you say, those that accompany you, public entertainment that you attend, your personal appearance, and what you eat and drink.

An example of social legalism is how you dress. In Deuteronomy 22:5, "clothing" is כְּלִי (kelîy) and refers to clothing prepared for a man. It does not mean clothing the shape of a man or clothing that resembles man's. It means that a woman should not wear clothing that has been made for a man. Clothing that is made for a woman, although it resembles man's clothing, does not violate this principle. 1 Tim. 2:9-10; 1 Peter 3:2-3.

*"A woman shall not wear man's clothing, nor shall a man put on a woman's clothing; for whoever does these things is an abomination to the LORD your God." (Deuteronomy 22:5, NASB)*

*"Likewise, I want women to adorn themselves with proper clothing, modestly and discreetly, not with braided hair and gold or pearls or costly garments, but rather by means of good works, as is proper for women making a claim to godliness." (1 Timothy 2:9-10, NASB)*

*"as they observe your chaste and respectful behavior. Your adornment must not be merely external—braiding the hair, and wearing gold jewelry, or putting on dresses;" (1 Peter 3:2-3, NASB)*

An example of social legalism is public entertainment. 1 Thess. 5:22; Titus 2:12.



*"abstain from every form of evil." (1 Thessalonians 5:22, NASB)*

*"instructing us to deny ungodliness and worldly desires and to live sensibly, righteously and godly in the present age," (Titus 2:12, NASB)*

Examples of social legalism are your vocabulary and personal appearance. This also includes societal customs, days, and occasions. An example of social legalism is what you eat such as meat and drink. Matt. 11; 1 Tim. 2; Rom. 14:6; Matt. 11.

*"He who observes the day, observes it for the Lord, and he who eats, does so for the Lord, for he gives thanks to God; and he who eats not, for the Lord he does not eat, and gives thanks to God." (Romans 14:6, NASB)*

An example of social legalism is the company you keep. 2 Cor. 6:11-16; 2 John 1:10-11.

*"Our mouth has spoken freely to you, O Corinthians, our heart is opened wide. You are not restrained by us, but you are restrained in your own affections. Now in a like exchange—I speak as to children—open wide to us also. Do not be bound together with unbelievers; for what partnership have righteousness and lawlessness, or what fellowship has light with darkness? Or what harmony has Christ with Belial, or what has a believer in common with an unbeliever? 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." (2 Corinthians 6:11-16, NASB)*

*"If anyone comes to you and does not bring this teaching, do not receive him into your house, and do not give him a greeting; for the one who gives him a greeting participates in his evil deeds." (2 John 1:10-11, NASB)*