

STUDY NOTES

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN A SERIES at NEW CITY CHURCH

www.newcityphx.com/sermons

The following content is based on the message "A False Spirituality" on 7/8/18 at New City Church in Phoenix, AZ. The following is not meant to be a full synopsis but rather a brief look at the main ideas. To use this Study Guide effectively you must listen to the message found at <http://newcityphx.com/sermons/>.

Leaders using these study notes for group study and reflection should read the Biblical text thoroughly before beginning, using this resource as assistance and not relying solely on this material for insight. We encourage all leaders to pray and ask the Spirit for revelation as they lead their respective community groups.

PRAYER

Pray and ask God to lead the discussion as everyone gets to share.

SCRIPTURE: COLOSSIANS 2:16-23

WHAT IS LEGALISM?

Paul is warning the Colossian church that these Christians (those who had a Jewish background) were insisting that the Colossians keep their Jewish traditions in addition to faith in Jesus. This is called legalism. By adding these do's and don'ts as requirements to the church's spiritual growth, they are in fact taking the focus off of Jesus.

JESUS + anything ≠ JESUS

- How is obeying the commands of Jesus—which we should all do—different from legalism?
- What are some modern forms of legalism?

WHY IS LEGALISM APPEALING?

One would think that no one would want to fall into legalism. However, it can be very appealing.

1. Brings order from chaos. If you lived with no rules and life was empty, then rules seem like the way to go.
2. It looks good on the outside. (i.e., "Look at that woman doing all that stuff for God. She must really love Him. What a good Christian")
3. It puts you in control of your spiritual fate. In contrast, faith in Christ places you in total reliance on Him.
4. It allows you to feel good about ourselves. When you do those things and others don't, you naturally think more highly of yourself.
5. It helps you hide your shame and guilt at your moral failures. It shifts your focus to what you can do. (i.e., you can't love my neighbor, so you won't eat pork instead)

- Do you fall into any of these traps? If so, which one(s) are the hardest for you?
- Legalism is man-made religion. What are some of the problems with man-made religion?

HOLD FAST TO JESUS

You must be connected to the Head to grow; the head is the center of control; you never want to be detached from Head.

The only way to grow in maturity—to be a "good Christian"—is to hold fast to Jesus. To "hold fast" means "to remain tightly secured; or to commit strongly to". Real spiritual growth is simple—movement toward Christ. That means we try to strip away things that don't help us move toward Jesus. Real spiritual growth comes from committing ourselves more and more to Christ.

- What should you ask yourself about how helpful your daily activities are for your life in Christ?
- Where is the Holy Spirit challenging you to draw a line in your life—not in the form of legalism, but in a way that would strip away something that isn't helpful for your walk with Jesus?
- What role should your Christ-centered community play in how you decide what you should and should not do?
- Pray with each other for strength to follow the convictions of the Holy Spirit.