

THE BEGINNING OF HOPE

PART THREE: WISDOM WALKING

Colossians 2:16-19 • Pastor Dean Lancaster • May 18, 2025

Legalism believes that conformity to certain rules makes one acceptable to God, either for salvation or spirituality. Legalism maintains the shadows of Old Testament Law Code; we now live in grace from Christ. Legalism robs us of grace, Jesus and fellowship.

Legalism devalues grace

Colossians 2:16 *So don't let anyone condemn you for what you eat or drink, or for not celebrating certain holy days or new moon ceremonies or Sabbaths.*

Legalism demands we perform in order to receive.

Under legalism, if I eat and drink the right things, God loves me more; if I observe the right days and rituals, God loves me more.

God sent his Son to offer the perfect sacrifice for sin once and for all.

We are commanded not to enslave ourselves, but to live under freeing grace.

Galatians 5:1 *So Christ has truly set us free. Now make sure that you stay free, and don't get tied up again in slavery to the law.*

Legalism devalues Christ

Colossians 2:17 *For these rules are only shadows of the reality yet to come. And Christ himself is that reality.*

Jesus is the only pathway to forgiveness and into the family of God.

Hebrews 10:4 *For it is not possible for the blood of bulls and goats to take away sins.*

The Old Testament law code pointed to the future of Jesus' coming.

Grace points us back to the Cross where Jesus paid it all.

Legalism values our performance over the sacrifice of Jesus.

Legalism devalues the church

Colossians 2:18–19 *Don't let anyone condemn you by insisting on pious self-denial or the worship of angels, saying they have had visions about these things. Their sinful minds have made them proud, and they are not connected to Christ, the head of the body. For he holds the whole body together with its joints and ligaments, and it grows as God nourishes it.*

Pride tells us we are strong enough without God and His Church and we can make ourselves “saved” by living according to religious sounding knowledge and observances.

The church, the Body of Christ, is the *only* way to receive ongoing spiritual growth from God.

We need the church because it is connected by ligaments and tendons to the head, Jesus Christ.

We are strengthened not only by the gifts of others serving us but by using our own gifts to serve others.

Take this with you...

We cannot mistake liberty for license.

Grace keeps us focused on its source, Jesus, not on our ability to earn His favor.

It is impossible to replace a relationship with Jesus with rules.

The Church is God's gift that nourishes and grows us into Christ-likeness.