



Legalism

LEGALISM— FOCUSING ON THE LAW

DAN MITCHELL

(Leviticus 11)



o that and you're grounded." Parents "lay down the law" for various infractions so they can protect their children from danger and train them to do what is right. These rules, along with parents' reaction to behavior, form the foundation and guideposts for people's adult lives. For the Israelites, the law revealed on Mount Sinai formed the foundation for their community. The purpose of this law was to show the Israelites how to be holy, just as God is holy (Lev. 11:45).

GOD ALONE SAVES

As effective as God's law is in pointing out right and wrong, problems occur when we focus on the law alone. This leaves us frustrated and dismayed because the law cannot make us holy (Gal. 2:16; 3:10; Heb. 10:1).

The Bible is clear: Salvation is from God through faith in Christ (Rom. 5:6-8; Eph. 2:8). We cannot save ourselves by obeying the law (Gal. 3:11). Yet, for the Christian, the law continues to have some value. Our works don't save us—but they are a natural outgrowth of our relationship with God.

THE TEMPTATION OF LEGALISM

Some Christians are tempted toward legalism—focusing on the law. They stress conformity to rules, believing that obedience to rules is integral to salvation. Many times, the rules on which legalists focus aren't even in the Bible, but they are set up as salvation indicators. Like the Pharisees of Jesus' day, legalists set up a fence of human-made laws to keep themselves from sinning. Jesus clearly censured the Pharisees for legalism (Matt. 23:2-4). To those who believed that they would be saved by

their own works, the apostle Paul wrote that their focus on the law canceled out Christ's work on their behalf (Gal. 5:1, 2).

The opposite tendency is just as dangerous, however. Some Christians claim that their behavior has nothing to do with their Christianity. Theologians call these people "antinomians" (against law). Paul admonished such people to stop sinning and to "glorify God" with their behavior (1 Cor. 6:20).

MAINTAINING THE BALANCE

The Bible encourages believers to balance the two extremes—the impulse to reject the law entirely, and the inclination to concentrate on works. John Calvin and Martin Luther thought much about the proper role of the law in a Christian's life. They identified three roles for the law:

- First, the law gives everyone—both believer and unbeliever—guidelines on how to order society. It shows everyone what is right and wrong.
- Second, the law drives people to Christ, by showing how evil they are—how short they have fallen of God's standard.
- Third, the law gives believers principles for living.

FREEDOM FOR LEGALISTS

Discussing the Rules

The first step to freedom from legalism is to discuss the rules—both the rules enforced by others and the rules of one's own conscience. There is nothing wrong with having personal convictions and abstaining from certain activities. In fact, Christians should be self-controlled (2 Pet. 1:6) and should avoid tempting situations (Prov. 4:14, 15). Moreover, Paul encourages Christians to tolerate each other's personal convictions, so that no one may be tempted to do something against their conscience (1 Cor. 8:1–13). But we run into problems when these rules become criteria by which a group determines whether someone is saved.

Although legalism can occur in various ways, there are a number of telltale signs. Often, legalism overemphasizes appearances—like hair length, clothing, or music. Typically, every rule has a well-thought-out rationale. Usually, the rule is designed to protect people from temptation; for example, "Card-playing may tempt someone to gamble, so don't do it." Often there is an authority figure providing interpretation and enforcement. Also, legalism cannot tolerate ambiguity, so nearly every facet of life has a rule. Taken to the extreme, legalism gets to be a test of salvation.

Legalism creates many victims. Sometimes a child affected by legalism grows up to be a rebel, refusing to accept rules in life. Legalism can also create a guilt-ridden person who constantly evaluates their life by certain strict standards. This type of person often has trouble accepting God's forgiveness.

The lives of legalists are defined by rules. They need to talk about the subtle effects of rules on them. Do the rules produce guilt? Does the law spark anger and rebellion? Discussing the rules will help

legalists to identify the attitudes that are imprisoning them.

Focusing on God

Because legalism focuses on appearances, the antidote to legalism is focusing on God and His love. Our Lord unconditionally loves us. In fact, Christ loved us so much, He died for us when we were still His enemies (Rom. 5:6–8). Just as the prodigal son came back to his father with nothing, so we come to God with nothing—no good works, no trophies, no awards. We come to God to accept what only He can give us—salvation through His Son. Our works amount to nothing. God's grace is everything. Reminding ourselves of God's amazing gift of salvation is the best way to fight legalism.

Living as God's Child

The Holy Spirit is in our hearts as evidence of our relationship to God (Gal. 4:5–7). The Spirit frees us from the law's condemnation and gives us the power to do what is right (Rom. 8:1–5). We are no longer slaves to the law; we are God's children (Rom. 8:15; Gal. 3:26–29). We are to live in the freedom God gives. "Therefore if the Son makes you free, you shall be free indeed" (John 8:36).

FURTHER MEDITATION:

Other passages to study about the issue of legalism include:

- > 1 Corinthians 10:23–11:1
- > Galatians 2:11–4:7
- > Ephesians 2:8, 9
- > Philippians 3:1–4:1
- > Colossians 2:11–23
- > Titus 2:11–14
- > James 2:14–26

To Learn More: Turn to the key passage note on legalism at Romans 7:6–14 on page 1473. See also the personality profile of the Pharisees on page 1269.

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had said, "You shall not covet."^a ⁸But sin, tak-
ing opportunity by the commandment, pro-
duced in me all *manner of* evil desire. For
apart from the law sin *was* dead. ⁹I was alive
once without the law, but when the com-
mandment came, sin revived and I died. ¹⁰And
the commandment, which
was to bring life, I found
to *bring death*. ¹¹For
sin, taking occasion by
the commandment, de-
ceived me, and by it
killed *me*. ¹²Therefore
the law *is* holy, and the
commandment holy and
just and good.

LAW CANNOT SAVE FROM SIN

¹³Has then what is good become death to
me? Certainly not! But sin, that it might ap-
pear sin, was producing death in me through
what is good, so that sin through the com-
mandment might become exceedingly sinful.
¹⁴For we know that the law is spiritual, but I
am carnal, sold under sin. ¹⁵For what I am do-
ing, I do not understand. For what I will to do,
that I do not practice; but what I hate, that I
do. ¹⁶If, then, I do what I will not to do, I agree
with the law that *it is* good. ¹⁷But now, *it is* no
longer I who do it, but sin that dwells in me.
¹⁸For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh)
nothing good dwells; for to will is present

For the wages of sin is death,
but the gift of God is eternal life
in Christ Jesus our Lord.

ROMANS 6:23


with me, but *how* to perform what is good I do
not find. ¹⁹For the good that I will *to do*, I do
not do; but the evil I will not *to do*, that I prac-
tice. ²⁰Now if I do what I will not *to do*, it is no
longer I who do it, but sin that dwells in me.

²¹I find then a law, that evil is present with
me, the one who wills
to do good. ²²For I de-
light in the law of God
according to the inward
man. ²³But I see anoth-
er law in my members,
warring against the law
of my mind, and bring-
ing me into captivity to

the law of sin which is in my members. ²⁴O
wretched man that I am! Who will deliver me
from this body of death? ²⁵I thank God—
through Jesus Christ our Lord!

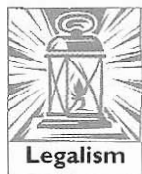
So then, with the mind I myself serve the
law of God, but with the flesh the law of sin.

FREE FROM INDWELLING SIN

 **There is therefore now no condemnation**
to those who are in Christ Jesus,^a who do
not walk according to the flesh, but according
to the Spirit. ²For the law of the Spirit of life in
Christ Jesus has made me free from the law of
sin and death. ³For what the law could not do

7:7 ^aExodus 20:17; Deuteronomy 5:21 8:1 ^aNU-
Text omits the rest of this verse.

KEY PASSAGE



Legalism

ENSLAVED TO RULES

(7:6-14)

As a defense against sin, some find stability in obeying a list of rules. But people encounter serious problems when they attempt to order their lives by rule-keeping. The law exposes shortcomings, but it doesn't inspire holy living. Through the law, we discern how truly wicked the world is and how sinful we are. Like a roadmap, the law shows us where we ought to be. It also shows us the impossibility of obeying any set of laws perfectly. Yet legalists will do their best—which is never good enough—and that leads them to intense guilt over their own sinfulness, and judgmentalism against others who do not keep all of their rules and thus are not as "holy" as they are. The legalist fails to comprehend the magnitude of God's grace, refusing to believe that God is trustworthy, generous, and forgiving. The antidote to legalism is recognition of God's gracious love. We are delivered from sin not by our own effort, but by His unmerited favor.

To Learn More: Turn to the article about legalism on pages 142, 143. See also the personality profile of the Pharisees on page 1269.

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PHARISEES

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are entering to go

in. ¹⁴Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you devour widows' houses, and for a pretense make long prayers. Therefore you will receive greater condemnation.^a

¹⁵"Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you travel land and sea to win one proselyte, and when he is won, you make him twice as much a son of hell as yourselves.

¹⁶"Woe to you, blind guides, who say, 'Whoever swears by the temple, it is nothing; but whoever swears by the gold of the temple, he is obliged to perform it.' ¹⁷Fools and blind! For which is greater, the gold or the temple that sanctifies^a the gold? ¹⁸And, 'Whoever swears by the altar, it is nothing; but whoever swears by the gift that is on it, he is obliged to perform it.' ¹⁹Fools and blind! For which is greater, the gift or the altar that sanctifies the gift? ²⁰Therefore he who swears by the altar,

swears by it and by all things on it. ²¹He who swears by the temple, swears by it and by Him who dwells^a in it. ²²And he who swears by heaven, swears by the throne of God and by Him who sits on it.

²³"Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you pay tithe of mint and anise and cummin, and have neglected the weightier matters of the law: justice and mercy and faith. These you ought to have done, without leaving the others undone. ²⁴Blind guides, who strain out a gnat and swallow a camel!

²⁵"Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you cleanse the outside of the cup and dish, but inside they are full of extortion

^{23:14} ^aNU-Text omits this verse.

^{23:17} ^aNU-Text reads *sanctified*. ^{23:21} ^aM-Text reads *dwelt*.



Legalism

PERSONALITY PROFILE

THE PHARISEES: LIVING BY THE RULES

(MATTHEW 23:23-28)

The Pharisees were the conservative religious believers of Jesus' day. They viewed themselves as the defenders of the law and went to great lengths to make sure that their outward behavior met the minute demands of the law as they interpreted it. They would invest great energy to "strain out a gnat"—concentrating on useless points of meaningless regulation, and instead would "swallow a camel"—missing the major demands of the law, such as justice, mercy, forgiveness, and redemption. The Pharisees looked pious and acted religious, but they were heartless, spiritually dead. They were legalists, and they depict the fallacy of legalism. Legalists make gods of the rules of God rather than reveling in relationship with God Himself.

"Pharisee" is a term that still fits those who concern themselves with the letter of the law. They take the rules seriously. Most Pharisees in Jesus' time were not living out their faith and values in a way that truly represented the heart of God. Jesus' major criticism was that although they looked religious, they acted wickedly. He delivered His sternest rebuke in Scripture in a series of eight "woes" pronounced against the scribes and Pharisees. He called them hypocrites, blind guides, fools, and the children of hell. Some Jewish religious leaders, like Nicodemus (John 3:1-21) and Joseph of Arimathea (Matt. 27:57-60) became disciples of Jesus. But most hated Jesus because He constantly pointed out that while their external behavior did meet the legalistic standards of the law, their hearts were often far from God.

Pharisees are alive, well, and doing damage today. Legalists focus on the rules, on appearances, on "being better" than other believers. Like the Pharisees of Jesus' day, they separate themselves from the rest of Christians, feeling superior and often acting judgmental. God's people need the Holy Spirit's help to see any accumulation of legalistic trash hidden in the corners of our lives. He will lead His people, gently but relentlessly, to repentance and true spiritual vitality.

To Learn More: Turn to the article about legalism on pages 142, 143. See also the key passage note at Romans 7:6-14 on page 1473.

22:32 ^aExodus

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^aPsalm 110:1

23:8 ^aNU-Text

into a pit on the Sabbath, will not lay hold of it and lift it out? ¹²Of how much more value then is a man than a sheep? Therefore it is lawful to do good on the Sabbath." ¹³Then He said to the man, "Stretch out your hand." And he stretched it out, and it was restored as whole as the other. ¹⁴Then the Pharisees went out and plotted against Him, how they might destroy Him

BEHOLD, MY SERVANT

¹⁵But when Jesus knew it, He withdrew from there. And great multitudes^a followed Him, and He healed them all. ¹⁶Yet He warned them not to make Him known, ¹⁷that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by Isaiah the prophet, saying:

¹⁸ "Behold! My Servant whom I have chosen,
My Beloved in whom My soul is well pleased!
I will put My Spirit upon Him,
And He will declare justice to the Gentiles.

¹⁹ He will not quarrel nor cry out,
Nor will anyone hear His voice in the streets.

²⁰ A bruised reed He will not break,
And smoking flax He will not quench,
Till He sends forth justice to victory;

²¹ And in His name Gentiles will trust."^a

A HOUSE DIVIDED CANNOT STAND

²²Then one was brought to Him who was demon-possessed, blind and mute; and He healed him, so that the blind and^a mute man both spoke and saw. ²³And all the multitudes were amazed and said, "Could this be the Son of David?"

²⁴Now when the Pharisees heard it they said, "This fellow does not cast out demons

except by Beelzebub,^a the ruler of the demons."

²⁵But Jesus knew their thoughts, and said to them: "Every kingdom divided against itself is brought to desolation, and every city or house divided against itself will not stand. ²⁶If Satan casts out Satan, he is divided against himself. How then will his kingdom stand? ²⁷And if I cast out demons by Beelzebub, by whom do your sons cast them out? Therefore they shall be your judges. ²⁸But if I cast out demons by the Spirit of God, surely the kingdom of God has come upon you. ²⁹Or how can one enter a strong man's house and plunder his goods, unless he first binds the strong man? And then he will plunder his house. ³⁰He who is not with Me is against Me, and he who does not gather with Me scatters abroad.

THE UNPARDONABLE SIN

³¹"Therefore I say to you, every sin and blasphemy will be forgiven men, but the blasphemy against the Spirit will not be forgiven men. ³²Anyone who speaks a word against the Son of Man, it will be forgiven him; but whoever speaks against the Holy Spirit, it will not be forgiven him, either in this age or in the age to come.

A TREE KNOWN BY ITS FRUIT

³³"Either make the tree good and its fruit good, or else make the tree bad and its fruit bad; for a tree is known by its fruit. ³⁴Brood of vipers! How can you, being evil, speak good things? For out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks. ³⁵A good man out of the good treasure of his heart^a brings forth good things, and an evil man out of the evil treasure

12:15 ^aNU-Text brackets multitudes as disputed.

12:21 ^aIsaiah 42:1-4 12:22 ^aNU-Text omits blind and. 12:24 ^aNU-Text and M-Text read Beelzebub.

12:35 ^aNU-Text and M-Text omit of his heart.



SOUL NOTE

Ruled Out (12:1-8) When Jesus' disciples ate grain while walking through a field on the Sabbath, the Pharisees criticized them for breaking God's commandment (Ex. 20:8). Their mistake, as Jesus pointed out, was in reducing God's law to a set of rules to be kept in order to earn His approval. When Christians focus on keeping rules in order to please God, they fall into the trap of legalism. Salvation is a free gift from God that cannot be earned by good works. Good works are the fruit of the Spirit and should be the outward actions of our inward faith. **Topic: Legalism**

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³⁸Then some answered, saying sign from You."

³⁹But He answered evil and adulter sign, and no sign of the prophet three days and a great fish, so will and three night ⁴¹The men of N ment with this because they re nah; and indeed ⁴²The queen of judgment with it, for she came hear the wisdom greater than So

AN UNCLEAN S

⁴³"When an man, he goes to and finds none to my house. When he comes, he is in order. ⁴⁵Then seven other spirits and they enter state of that a shall it also be

JESUS' MOTHER

⁴⁶While He tudes, behold,



from sin and

Greeks or to the church of God, ³³just as I also please all *men* in all *things*, not seeking my own profit, but the *profit* of many, that they may be saved.

11 **1** Imitate me, just as I also imitate Christ.

HEAD COVERINGS

²Now I praise you, brethren, that you remember me in all things and keep the traditions just as I delivered *them* to you. ³But I want you to know that the head of every man is Christ, the head of woman is man, and the head of Christ is God. ⁴Every man praying or prophesying, having *his* head covered, dishonors his head. ⁵But every woman who prays or prophesies with *her* head uncovered dishonors her head, for that is one and the same as if her head were shaved. ⁶For if a woman is not covered, let her also be shorn. But if it is shameful for a woman to be shorn or shaved, let her be covered. ⁷For a man indeed ought not to cover *his* head, since he is the image and glory of God; but woman is the glory of man. ⁸For man is not from woman, but woman from man. ⁹Nor was man created for the woman, but woman for the man. ¹⁰For this reason the woman ought to have a *symbol* of authority on *her* head, because of the angels.

¹¹Nevertheless, neither is man independent of

woman, nor woman independent of man, in the Lord. ¹²For as woman *came* from man, even so man also *comes* through woman; but all things are from God.

¹³Judge among yourselves. Is it proper for a woman to pray to God with her head uncovered? ¹⁴Does not even nature itself teach you that if a man has long hair, it is a dishonor to him? ¹⁵But if a woman has long hair, it is a glory to her; for *her* hair is given to her^a for a covering. ¹⁶But if anyone seems to be contentious, we have no such custom, nor *do* the churches of God.

CONDUCT AT THE LORD'S SUPPER

¹⁷Now in giving these instructions I do not praise *you*, since you come together not for the better but for the worse. ¹⁸For first of all, when you come together as a church, I hear that there are divisions among you, and in part I believe it. ¹⁹For there must also be factions among you, that those who are approved may be recognized among you. ²⁰Therefore when you come together in one place, it is not to eat the Lord's Supper. ²¹For in eating, each one takes his own supper ahead of *others*; and one is hungry and another is drunk. ²²What! Do you not have houses to eat and drink in?

11:15 ^aM-Text omits *to her*.

SOUL NOTE



Assorted Scruples (10:23-33) Christian freedom does not mean that believers can live as they please. Christians have freedom *with* responsibility to live according to the guidelines found in God's Word. Some Christians make guidelines for themselves based on their own scruples. These guidelines should not be forced upon others, but believers should respect one another's guidelines. To force others to live according to our scruples is legalism; to show respect for another's scruples exhibits Christian love. **Topic: Legalism**

SOUL NOTE



R and R (11:2-6) The concern over head coverings for women was most likely a cultural need in order to keep harmony in the church in Corinth. While head coverings may not be required in many cultures today, the principles behind Paul's words are timeless. Christian women should show respect for Christian men and exhibit reverent behavior in worship. Reverence and respect are always important to maintain the church's witness to the watching world. **Topic: Women's Issues**

willed to make known what are the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles: which^a is Christ in you, the hope of glory. ²⁸Him we preach, warning every man and teaching every man in all wisdom, that we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus: ²⁹To this *end* I also labor, striving according to His working which works in me mightily.

NOT PHILOSOPHY BUT CHRIST

2 For I want you to know what a great conflict I have for you and those in Laodicea, and for as many as have not seen my face in the flesh, ²that their hearts may be encouraged, being knit together in love, and *attaining* to all riches of the full assurance of understanding, to the knowledge of the mystery of God, both of the Father and^a of Christ, ³in whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge.

⁴Now this I say lest anyone should deceive you with persuasive words. ⁵For though I am absent in the flesh, yet I am with you in spirit, rejoicing to see your *good* order and the steadfastness of your faith in Christ.

⁶As you therefore have received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk in Him, ⁷rooted and built up in Him and established in the faith, as you have been taught, abounding in it^a with thanksgiving.

⁸Beware lest anyone cheat you through philosophy and empty deceit, according to the tradition of men, according to the basic principles of the world, and not according to Christ. ⁹For in Him dwells all the fullness of the Godhead bodily; ¹⁰and you are complete in Him, who is the head of all principality and power.

NOT LEGALISM BUT CHRIST

¹¹In Him you were also circumcised with the circumcision made without hands, by putting

off the body of the sins^a of the flesh, by the circumcision of Christ, ¹²buried with Him in baptism, in which you also were raised with Him through faith in the working of God, who raised Him from the dead. ¹³And you, being dead in your trespasses and the uncircumcision of your flesh, He has made alive together with Him, having forgiven you all trespasses, ¹⁴having wiped out the handwriting of requirements that was against us, which was contrary to us. And He has taken it out of the way, having nailed it to the cross. ¹⁵Having disarmed principalities and powers, He made a public spectacle of them, triumphing over them in it.

¹⁶So let no one judge you in food or in drink, or regarding a festival or a new moon or sabbaths, ¹⁷which are a shadow of things to come, but the substance is of Christ. ¹⁸Let no one cheat you of your reward, taking delight in *false* humility and worship of angels, intruding into those things which he has not^a seen, vainly puffed up by his fleshly mind, ¹⁹and not holding fast to the Head, from whom all the body, nourished and knit together by joints and ligaments, grows with the increase *that is* from God.

²⁰Therefore,^a if you died with Christ from the basic principles of the world, why, as *though* living in the world, do you subject yourselves to regulations—²¹"Do not touch, do not taste, do not handle," ²²which all concern things which perish with the using—according to the commandments and doctrines of men? ²³These things indeed have an ap-

1:27 ^aM-Text reads *who*. 2:2 ^aNU-Text omits *both of the Father and*. 2:7 ^aNU-Text omits *in it*. 2:11 ^aNU-Text omits *of the sins*. 2:18 ^aNU-Text omits *not*. 2:20 ^aNU-Text and M-Text omit *Therefore*



SOUL NOTE

Many Opinions, One Lord (2:16) Christ has set His people free from legalistic rules concerning things like food, drink, and worship style. Believers should not judge others by concluding that certain preferences exclude them from being Christians. Believers hold many different opinions about living out one's faith, but we must not criticize or condemn fellow Christians whose lifestyle choices differ from ours. As long as other believers are not violating Scripture—committing outright sin or teaching heresy—we need to accept them into the fellowship as members of God's family. We have one Savior and Lord. **Topic: Legalism**

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GREETING

1 Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ, by the commandment of God our Savior and the Lord Jesus Christ, our hope,

2To Timothy, a true son in the faith:

Grace, mercy, and peace from God our Father and Jesus Christ our Lord.

NO OTHER DOCTRINE

3As I urged you when I went into Macedonia—remain in Ephesus that you may charge some that they teach no other doctrine, **4**nor give heed to fables and endless genealogies, which cause disputes rather than godly edification which is in faith. **5**Now the purpose of the commandment is love from a pure heart, from a good conscience, and from sincere faith, **6**from which some, having strayed, have turned aside to idle talk, **7**desiring to be teachers of the law, understanding neither what they say nor the things which they affirm.

8But we know that the law is good if one uses it lawfully, **9**knowing this: that the law is not made for a righteous person, but for the lawless and insubordinate, for the ungodly and for sinners, for the unholy and profane, for murderers of fathers and murderers of mothers, for manslayers, **10**for fornicators, for sodomites, for kidnappers, for liars, for perjurers, and if there is any other thing that is contrary to sound doctrine, **11**according to the glorious gospel of the blessed God which was committed to my trust.

GLORY TO GOD FOR HIS GRACE

12And I thank Christ Jesus our Lord who has enabled me, because He counted me faithful, putting me into the ministry, **13**although I was formerly a blasphemer, a persecutor, and an insolent man; but I obtained mercy because I did

it ignorantly in unbelief. **14**And the grace of our Lord was exceedingly abundant, with faith and love which are in Christ Jesus. **15**This is a faithful saying and worthy of all acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am chief. **16**However, for this reason I obtained mercy, that in me first Jesus Christ might show all longsuffering, as a pattern to those who are going to believe on Him for everlasting life. **17**Now to the King eternal, immortal, invisible, to God who alone is wise,^a be honor and glory forever and ever. Amen.

FIGHT THE GOOD FIGHT

18This charge I commit to you, son Timothy, according to the prophecies previously made concerning you, that by them you may wage the good warfare, **19**having faith and a good conscience, which some having rejected, concerning the faith have suffered shipwreck, **20**of whom are Hymenaeus and Alexander, whom I delivered to Satan that they may learn not to blaspheme.

PRAY FOR ALL MEN

2Therefore I exhort first of all that supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks be made for all men, **2**for kings and all who are in authority, that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and reverence. **3**For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Savior, **4**who desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth. **5**For there is one God and one Mediator between God and men, the Man Christ Jesus, **6**who gave Himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time, **7**for which I was appointed a preacher and an apostle—I am speaking the truth in Christ^a

1:17 ^aNU-Text reads *to the only God*. **2:7** ^aNU-Text omits *in Christ*.

SOUL NOTE



Legal Notes (1:8, 9) Laws give people direction for living, but following laws can never save anyone. The law offers a standard of behavior; it shows how far people fall short of God's perfection, and it demonstrates how much we need His grace and forgiveness. But if people try to live right and keep laws in order to be good enough for God, they will slip into the trap of legalism. That will harm them, for they can never keep the law perfectly. Christ has set us free from the law so that we can obey Him through the power of the Holy Spirit. **Topic: Legalism**