

THD-015 and 016 The Curse of the Law

*“Blessed [happy] are they
that hear the word of God,
and keep it.” (Luke 11:28)*

Ephesians 2:8 For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, *it is* the gift of God; 9 not as a result of works, so that no one may boast.

Rom. 11:6, *"But if it is by grace, it is no longer on the basis of works, otherwise grace is no longer grace."*

Gal. 2:21, *"I do not nullify the grace of God; for if righteousness comes through the Law, then Christ died needlessly."*

Gal. 3:24, "Therefore the Law has become our tutor to lead us to Christ, that we may be justified by faith."

1 Corinthians 3:11 For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ.'

John 3:16, "For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish, but have eternal life."

Peter 1:2-3 Grace and peace be multiplied unto you through the knowledge of God, and of Jesus our Lord, According as his divine power hath given unto us all things that [pertain] unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of him that hath called us to glory and virtue...

*I am come that they might
have life, and that they might have it more
abundantly. John 10:10*

“As the Father has loved me, so have I loved you. Abide in my love. If you keep my commandments, you will abide in my love, just as I have kept my Father’s commandments and abide in His love. These things I have spoken to you, that my joy may be in you, and that your joy may be full.” – John 15:9-11 ESV

Galatians 4:15
What has happened to all your joy?

Galatians 4:15

15 Where then is that sense of blessing you had?

You were so happy! What has happened? is literally “Where is your happiness?” or “... your blessedness?” The question is rhetorical and implies that when Paul was asking the question the Galatians no longer felt the same way they did when he was with them.

Verse fifteen. The word blessedness is from makarios (μακαριος) which in secular Greek means prosperous, and which indicates that the makarios (μακαριος) person is in a state of prosperity.
He asks, Where is that prosperous condition now?

Let's look back from Chapter 4 verse 15 to see if we
can learn just where their "Joy went."
Let's back it up to where we left off in our study of
Galatians back in 2002:
Galatians 3:1
You foolish Galatians, who has bewitched you,

In chapter 3, Paul gives six points to show the Galatians the superiority of grace over law.

(1) By grace, salvation and the Holy Spirit are given.

(2) Abraham, the father of our people, was saved by grace.

(3) Grace gives redemption and salvation; the law brings condemnation.

(4) Abraham was saved by grace hundreds of years before the law was given.

(5) The law's purpose is to act as a guide that leads us to Christ.

(6) By grace a love relationship with God and one another is obtained.

The tone of the whole verse—and of the whole section, for that matter—is one of unbelief.

It is unthinkable to Paul that the Galatians have changed so quickly.

The only explanation possible is that they have gone out of their minds!

Foolish (*NAB* “senseless,” *NEB* “stupid,” *JB* “mad”) puts the emphasis not on natural stupidity but on failure to use one’s mental and spiritual powers.

"What are you thinking!"

Who put a spell on you? (literally, “who has bewitched you?”) is a rhetorical question, and the “who” refers to the Judaizers.

The word “bewitched” (pharmakeia) itself suggests the use of magic, particularly the casting of a spell through the use of potions or drugs.

He is likely using “bewitched” in a metaphorical sense, and he probably means by it “to pervert,” “to lead astray,” or “to confuse the mind.”

Or, to bring out the drug aspect of pharmakeia:

“What are you smokin”!

Before your very eyes ...

The whole expression is metaphorical and describes the familiar practice of making public announcements by means of bills or posters.

In this case the announcement is “the death of Jesus Christ on the cross.”

The final sentence in this verse is related to the reason for Paul’s having concluded that the Galatians had been bewitched.

“How could this have happened, since before your very eyes you had a clear description of Christ's sacrifice on the cross?”

This Paul did in his preaching among the Galatians. This placarded notice of the crucifixion of the Lord Jesus should have been enough to keep the eyes of the Galatians from wandering to the enticements of the Judaizers.

The word *crucified* is in the perfect tense.

This speaks of the fact that the apostle is not speaking of the figure of a dead Christ on a crucifix, but of the risen, ascended Christ who had been crucified.-Wuest

Paul is direct and stern as he calls the Galatians foolish. They had fallen under the bewitching, deceptive spell of the Judaizers. They accepted a message that implied the death of Christ was insufficient. - Holman

Galatians 3:1 Translation.

O, unreflecting Galatians, who bewitched you, before whose eyes Jesus Christ was placarded publicly as the Crucified One? - Wuest

Galatians 3:1

2 This is the only thing I want to find out from you: did you receive the Spirit by the works of the Law, or by hearing with faith?

Paul, in verses 2–5, asks four rhetorical questions to demonstrate that salvation is through faith alone. These questions concern the reception and work of the Holy Spirit. - Holman

Note that the Holy Spirit is the issue in the life of the Christian.

Verse two. We have here a forcible appeal to the experience of the Galatians.

By the use of the word now, Paul indicates that an answer to the question about to be asked, would be a decisive argument.

It is as if Paul said, "I will convince you of your error by this one argument."

By the receiving of the Spirit, Paul means the initial entrance of the Holy Spirit into their [spirit] when they put their trust in the Lord Jesus.

The words "*by the hearing of faith,*" are from *ex akoes pisteos* (ἐξ ἀκοῆς πίστεως).

Translation. *This only am I desiring to learn from you.
By means of law works did you receive the Spirit or by
means of the message which proclaims faith?*

Galatians 3:2

Verse three. In verse 2, Paul speaks of the initial entrance of the Holy Spirit into the hearts of the Galatian Christians when they put their trust in the Lord Jesus.

In this verse, he is speaking of the sanctifying work of the Spirit in the lives of these saints.

He asks the question, “Are you to such a degree irrational? *Having begun your Christian life in dependence upon the indwelling Spirit, are you now being brought on to the state of spiritual maturity by means of self effort?*”

The words made perfect are from *epiteleo* (ἐπιτελεω) which means “to bring something to the place where it is complete.”

The cognate noun is the word Paul uses when he speaks of a spiritually mature Christian, one who is living a well-rounded, well-balanced, mature life.

By the word *flesh* here he refers to all that a person is as the product of natural generation apart from the transforming power of the Holy Spirit in regeneration. The word speaks of the unsaved man, body and soul, controlled by his totally depraved nature, together with all his human accomplishments, positions, capabilities, and philosophies.

Note that Paul appeals to their SPIRITUAL LIVES as an argument for Grace.

Surely their Spiritual Lives were vibrant, a welcomed alternative to their old Lives in the Flesh and a source of their Happiness.

The Judaizers in preaching a message of law obedience to the Galatian Christians, caused these latter to abandon the position of grace and put themselves in the sphere of law, both that of the Judaizers' system of legalism, and that of the Old Testament economy.

Because there was no provision in the Mosaic economy for an indwelling Spirit who would sanctify the believer as that believer trusted Him for that work, the Galatians were turning away from the teaching and the reality of the ministry of the Spirit in the life of the believer in this dispensation of grace, and were starting to depend upon self effort in an attempt to obey an outward legalistic system of works.

Thus these Christians who had begun their Christian lives in dependence upon the Holy Spirit, now were depending upon self effort to continue in them the work of sanctification which the Holy Spirit had begun. The present tense of the verb here indicates that the Galatians had already begun this attempt. Paul says in effect, *“How foolish to think that you can bring yourselves to a state of spiritual maturity in your Christian lives. That is the work of the Spirit. Only He can do that for you.”*

Holman says it this way:

Are you now trying to attain your goal by human effort?

Paul declares them **foolish** for having begun the Christian life by faith but trying to reach maturity through human effort.

Since there was no way under the law for the Holy Spirit to sanctify, the Judaizers promoted the only means to maturity they knew: obedience to the law

*For the law of the **Spirit of life** in Christ Jesus has made me free from the law of sin and death. {3} For what the law could not do in that it was weak through the flesh, God did by sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, on account of sin: He condemned sin in the flesh, {4} that the righteous requirement of the law might be fulfilled in us who do not walk according to the flesh but according to the Spirit.
(Romans 8:2-4 NKJV)*

2 Peter 1:3 His divine power has granted to us all things that pertain to life and godliness, through the knowledge of him who called us to his own glory and excellence, 4 by which he has granted to us his precious and very great promises, so that through them you may become partakers of the divine nature, having escaped from the corruption that is in the world because of sinful desire.

Galatians 3:3 Translation.
Are you so unreflecting? Having begun by means of the Spirit, now are you being brought to maturity by the flesh?

Galatians 3:3

4 Did you suffer so many things in vain—if indeed it was in vain?

5 So then, does He who provides you with the Spirit and works miracles among you, do it by the works of the Law, or by hearing with faith?

Paul points out the "sufferings" they had endured by walking in the Flesh in contrast to the Life in the Spirit and the miraculous gifts the Father had given them in evidence of the New Life.

GALATIANS 3:4 Translation.
So many things did you suffer in vain? If indeed they really were in vain?

GALATIANS 3:4

Galatians 3:5 Translation.

Therefore, the One who is constantly supplying the Spirit to you in bountiful measure, and constantly working miracles among you, by means of law works is He doing these things, or by means of the message which proclaims faith?

Galatians 3:5

6 Even so Abraham believed God, and it was reckoned to him as righteousness.

7 Therefore, be sure that it is those who are of faith who are sons of Abraham.

8 The Scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the Gentiles by faith, preached the gospel beforehand to Abraham, saying, "All the nations will be blessed in you."

9 So then those who are of faith are blessed with Abraham, the believer.

Galatians 3:6 Translation.

Just as Abraham believed God, and his act of faith was credited to him, resulting in (his) righteousness.

Galatians 3:6

7 Therefore, be sure that it is those who are of faith who are sons of Abraham.

8 The Scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the Gentiles by faith, preached the gospel beforehand to Abraham, saying, "All the nations will be blessed in you."

9 So then those who are of faith are blessed with Abraham, the believer.

Galatians 3:7 Translation.

Ye perceive, therefore, that those who are of faith these are sons of Abraham.

Galatians 3:7

8 The Scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the Gentiles by faith, preached the gospel beforehand to Abraham, saying, "All the nations will be blessed in you."

9 So then those who are of faith are blessed with Abraham, the believer.

Galatians 3:8 Translation:

And the scripture foreseeing that on a basis of faith God justifies the Gentiles, announced the gospel beforehand to Abraham, namely, All the Gentiles shall be blessed in you.

Galatians 3:8

Abraham rejoiced to see the coming of that day (John 8:56).

Galatians 3:9 Translation.

*So that those who are believing ones are being blessed
in company with believing Abraham.*

Galatians 3:9

*The Judaizers taught that the law was a means of justification.
But in this next section Paul shows that the law is a means of condemnation, and that it is the Lord Jesus who rescues us from its condemnation through the blood of His Cross (3:10–14).*

10 *For as many as are of the works of the Law are under a curse; for it is written, “Cursed is everyone who does not abide by all things written in the book of the law, to perform them.”*

11 *Now that no one is justified by the Law before God is evident; for, “The righteous man shall live by faith.” [Remember hearing that before?]*

12 *However, the Law is not of faith; on the contrary, “He who practices them shall live by them.”*

10 *For as many as are of the works of the Law are under a curse; for it is written, “Cursed is everyone who does not abide by all things written in the book of the law, to perform them.”*

Verse ten. Paul quotes from Deuteronomy 27:26. Instead of being blessed by their act of putting themselves under the law, men put themselves under a curse.

The Judaizers maintained that their knowledge of the law entitled them to the blessings which were attached to the sons of Abraham.

Our Lord said to representatives of this same system:
“Ye are constantly searching the scriptures; and in them ye think ye have eternal life: and they are they which testify of Me. And ye will not come to Me that ye might have life” (John 5:39, 40).

This was the sin of Israel, ignoring the righteousness of God, Christ, and going about to establish its own righteousness (Rom. 10:1–4).

Paul argues that on the contrary, Israel has by its attempt to be justified by the law, entailed the curse of the broken law, for no man could keep the law.

This curse is not merely the wrath of God in the form of the final banishment of the sinner from His presence, with all the sorrow and misery which that includes, but represents also a present condition of alienation from God caused by a violation of His law.

The word *continueth* is a figurative expression. It speaks of the law as a prescribed district or domain in which one remains or out of which one goes.

Romans 7:5 For while we were in the flesh, the sinful passions, which were aroused by the Law, were at work in the members of our body to bear fruit for death.

⁶But now we have been released from the Law, having died to that by which we were bound, so that we serve in newness of the Spirit and not in oldness of the letter.

⁷What shall we say then? Is the Law sin? May it never be! On the contrary, I would not have come to know sin except through the Law; for I would not have known about coveting if the Law had not said, "You shall not covet."

⁸But sin, taking opportunity through the commandment, produced in me coveting of every kind; for apart from the Law sin is dead. ⁹I was once alive apart from the Law; but when the commandment came, sin became alive and I died; ¹⁰and this commandment, which was to result in life, proved to result in death for me; ¹¹for sin, taking an opportunity through the commandment, deceived me and through it killed me. ¹²So then, the Law is holy, and the commandment is holy and righteous and good.

7:7 “*What shall we say then*” Paul is returning to his use of diatribe (cf. 6:1, 15; 7:1, 13).

“*Is the Law sin*” One of the paradoxes of revelation is that God used the holiness and goodness of the Law as a mirror to reveal sin, so as to bring fallen mankind to the place of repentance and faith (cf. vv. 12–13; Gal. 3).

“*May it never be*” Paul’s characteristic rejection of a false assertion (cf. v. 13; 3:4, 6, 31; 6:2, 15; 9:14; 11:1, 11; Gal. 2:17; 3:21).

“*on the contrary*” Paul’s literary style in Romans uses strong contrasts to make his points (cf. 3:4, 6, 31; 6:2, 15; 7:13; 9:14; 11:1, 11).

“I would not have come to know sin except through the Law”

This is one of the key passages which reveal the concept of the Mosaic Law functioning as a mirror to reveal personal sin (cf. 3:20; 4:65; 5:20; Gal. 3:14–29, especially v. 24).

To break the Law one time was to break the Covenant and, thereby, to bear its consequences (cf. v. 10 and James 2:10)!

“except through the Law” This is a SECOND CLASS CONDITIONAL SENTENCE which is called “contrary to fact,” Paul was convicted of sin. This is the only example of this grammatical feature in Romans. Paul does use it in Gal. 1:10; 3:21, as well as I Cor. 2:8; 5:10; 11:31; and II Cor. 12:11.

“YOU SHALL NOT COVET” This is a quote of the last command of the Ten Commandments (cf. Exod. 20:17; Deut. 5:21).

This last commandment focuses on proper attitude, which is really the essence of all of them (cf. Matt. 5–7). The Law is often referred to as “the commandment” (cf. vv. 9, 11, 12, 13).

The term “covet” meant “to set one’s heart on” or “to desire strongly.”

God has given humans (lost and saved) many good things through creation, but humans tend to take God’s gifts beyond the God–given bounds.

“More–and–more for me at any cost” becomes their motto!
Self is a terrible tyrant!

Romans 7:8 *"But the law, taking opportunity"*

NASB, NKJV - "taking opportunity"

NRSV - "seizing an opportunity"

TEV - "found its chance"

JB - "took advantage of"

This was a military term that was used of a beach-head or base of operations (cf. vv. 8 and 11).

It is personalized in this context (cf. vv. 9, 11).

Sin was characterized as a military operation (cf. v.11)

led by a military leader (cf. vv. 11 and 17; 6:12, 14, 16).

Let's go back to Galatians to see this principle in operation:

In Galatians 2:11 Paul turns to an incidence that illustrated his apostolic clout. He exercised his apostolic authority with the strongest church leader—Peter. Paul's authority as an apostle is confirmed through this correction of Peter. In this section, Paul comes to Antioch and corrects Peter, the leader of the Jews, because he was clearly in the wrong by giving the appearance that he was siding with the false teachers.

Although written to the Galatians to establish his authority, his equality with the other Apostles -- like Peter -- it serves us an example of the effects of the "Curse of the Law":

Let's read the whole passage:

Galatians 2:11 But when Cephas came to Antioch, I opposed him to his face, because he stood condemned.

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.

13 The rest of the Jews joined him in hypocrisy, with the result that even Barnabas was carried away by their hypocrisy.

14 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?"

15 "We are Jews by nature and not sinners from among the Gentiles;

16 nevertheless knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the Law but through faith in Christ Jesus, even we have believed in Christ Jesus, so that we may be justified by faith in Christ and not by the works of the Law; since by the works of the Law no flesh will be justified.

17 “But if, while seeking to be justified in Christ, we ourselves have also been found sinners, is Christ then a minister of sin? May it never be!

18 “For if I rebuild what I have once destroyed, I prove myself to be a transgressor.

19 “For through the Law I died to the Law, so that I might live to God.

20 “I have been crucified with Christ; and it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself up for me.

21 “I do not nullify the grace of God, for if righteousness comes through the Law, then Christ died needlessly.”

2:12. Peter, a Jew, was in Antioch eating and fellowshiping with the Gentiles.

When some of these same Judaizers (the circumcision group) arrived, Peter began to draw back and separate himself from the Gentiles.

He was afraid of what the Judaizers would think.

Peter thought by avoiding the Gentiles he would not offend James's legalistic, judaizing friends.

By identifying with them, Peter was promoting their false, legalistic beliefs.

Peter by his actions was compromising grace.

These men were probably not *sent* by James, an apostle and the half brother of Jesus, but were probably part of his church in Jerusalem.

2:13. The other Jews, including Barnabas, joined Peter in standing with the Judaizers and ostracizing the Gentiles.

They were guilty of hypocrisy because they were professing to be one with the Gentiles, yet by their actions they denied their oneness.

The pressure must have been intense because even Barnabas, who was from Cyprus—a Gentile center—succumbed.

He had been with Paul on a missionary journey to reach the Gentiles!

The Correction by Paul (vv. 14–21)

2:14. Paul knew he had to confront Peter before his actions damaged the church.

Therefore, Paul reprimanded Peter publicly in front of them all for supporting division between the Jews and Gentiles.

Such segregation went against the truth of the gospel that Jew and Gentile were equal and one in Christ.

Paul uses a rhetorical question in this verse to reprimand Peter:

“You are a Jew, yet you live like a Gentile. Now you want the Gentiles to live like Jews. What kind of inconsistency is that?”

2:15. It is inconsistent and illogical for privileged Jews by birth, who rejected the keeping of their very own law as the way to salvation, to now burden the Gentiles with the keeping of that very same law.

The phrase Gentile sinners was probably spoken in irony.

Quite often, the Jews could not mention Gentiles without calling them "Gentile sinners."

Yet, in Paul's eyes, the sinners were the Judaizers, not the Gentiles, Christian believers in his church.

2:16. Verse 16 is one of the most important verses in Galatians because in it Paul states the content of the gospel of grace.

This is the first time Paul uses the word *justified* which means “to declare righteous.”

Justification is the act of God, whereby he declares the believing sinner righteous in Jesus Christ.

Negatively, Paul says a man is not justified by observing the law.

Stated positively, justification is by faith in Christ Jesus.

Negatively, Paul has rebuffed the false teachings of the Judaizers which Peter had supported by his behavior in Antioch.

Positively, he has presented the true, grace path to righteousness.

2:17. The opponents to this message of grace argued that if people aren't under law then they will freely sin. They reasoned that people could believe in Christ but then live as they wanted and by their sinful actions make Christ a promoter of sin. Paul answers this accusation with an emphatic, "No!" Grace leads to freedom from sin's slavery to obey God, not license to disobey him.

2:18. A person who rebuilds (that is, returns to) the law after believing in Christ will find himself a lawbreaker. No one except Jesus can keep the law perfectly. So to put one's relationship with God on a legalistic basis is to make oneself a lawbreaker.

2:19. In verses 19–20 Paul teaches about the transformation that occurs in believers.

He is continuing to correct Peter for cowering to a legalistic system that is powerless to change lives.

Paul uses the death and resurrection motif in each verse.

First, Paul states through the law I died to the law.

Paul may have meant by this that, when he tried to live up to the law, he saw that it was impossible.

He saw that the penalty for failing to live up to the law was death.

Seeing his clear condemnation according to the law drove him into the arms of grace, to rely on Jesus to save him.

Why you could write a commentary:

Or he might have meant that, when he saw that the law was insufficient to save him, he turned his back on the law and made it no longer of any influence in his life.

Or he might have meant that the law demanded death for sin.

Christ died because he took our death penalty upon himself.

By believing in Christ, his death pays for the death that the law required of us.

Because I am united with Christ by faith, the law killed not only him but all who are joined to him by faith.

Therefore, the believer has died to the law. Since we have died, the law must acquit us of further punishment.

So through fulfilling the law by dying in Christ, we are now free from the law.

Whatever Paul meant, the result is that he no longer is under the jurisdiction of the law.

It is powerless over him.

2:20. Now Paul expands upon verse 19.

He died to the law (v. 19) by being crucified with Christ.

He lives for God (v. 19) because Christ lives in him.

Believers are in union with Christ.

We are united with him in his death, burial, and resurrection.

Thus, we died with him to the law (see Rom. 6).

Again, we are uncertain as to what Paul meant by I have been crucified with Christ.

It certainly did not mean that he was physically crucified.

Dead people don't write letters. In what sense was he crucified?

He may have used the sentence as a figure of speech, referring to the effects of Christ's death which every believer experiences.

It might be reworded, "I have been as good as crucified, since the results of Christ's crucifixion count for me."

Or he may have referred to a sense in which every believer is required to endure a similar experience of spiritual crucifixion to the desires of self. We put to death our own plans to follow Jesus. It might be reworded, "I have crucified my right to self-control in life, in the same way that Christ was crucified physically. He gave up his right to physical life; I gave up my right to self-life."

Or he may have referred to some sense in which the believer, because he is “in Christ” is seen by God as having actually died.

He may have been referring to the union between the believer and Jesus, when the believer in Jesus experiences, spiritually, everything Jesus experienced. Whatever Paul meant about having died in Christ, the point is that his death severed him from the requirements of the law.

Therefore, for Peter and the Judaizers to go back to the law is to visit the graveyard.

Paul goes on to say that he can live for God because Christ lives in him.

Finally, Paul says that faith is the principle that unlocks the life of Christ in the believer.

The more we exercise faith in Christ the more he is free to live through us.

The more we are obedient to the Scripture and the leading of the Holy Spirit, the more our life approximates what Jesus would do if he were in our shoes.

In that sense, the life he lives, he lives by faith in the Son of God.

2:21. Now Paul presents his conclusion.

The false-teaching Judaizers were voiding the grace of God by adding the works-oriented law to the work of Christ.

Therefore, Paul says I do not set aside the grace of God (as the legalists did), for if righteousness could be gained through the law, Christ died for nothing!

If humans could be right with God by obeying the law, why would he send his Son to suffer and die on a cross?

Paul concludes his correction of Peter by showing the utter absurdity of turning back to the law. The very reason Christ died on the cross to pay for sin was because the law could not remove sin or impart righteousness. Grace provides what the law was powerless to provide—righteousness.

III. Conclusion (from Holman)

The Pure Gospel Stream

The gospel is like a pure stream.

Those who drink from it receive eternal life; but when people add requirements to salvation that are unnecessary, the stream gets dirty.

The false teachers in Galatia were polluting the gospel by requiring the Christians to obey Jewish law, especially circumcision in addition to believing in Christ.

Many today would have us return to trying to earn God's favor through following rituals or obeying a set of rules.

III. Conclusion

Whenever anyone tries to earn their salvation, they are falling into the bondage of legalism.

Legalism pollutes the stream, changing it from a pure, life-giving stream to a bitter, deadly-toxic stream.

When we try to earn God's favor or eternal life, we are drinking from a deadly stream. -- Holman

Pastor and author Max Lucado gives a similar assessment of legalism when he writes:
"A legalist believes the supreme force behind salvation is you. If you look right, speak right, and belong to the right segment of the right group, you will be saved. The brunt of responsibility doesn't lie within God; it lies within you. The result? The outside sparkles. The talk is good, and the step is true. But look closely! Listen carefully. Something is missing.

Something is missing.

What is it?

Joy.

What's there? Fear. (That you won't do enough.)

Arrogance. (That you have done enough.)

Failure. (That you have made a mistake.)

Legalism is slow torture, suffocation of the spirit,
amputation of one's dreams.

Legalism is just enough religion to keep you, but not
enough to nourish you.

So you starve.

Your teachers don't know where to go for food, so you
starve together.

Your diet is rules and standards. No vitamins. No zest. Just
bland, predictable religion."

(Max Lucado, *He Still Moves Stones*, Dallas: Word
Publishers, 1993, 128–29).

In contrast to legalism stands grace.

The bag of grace has written on it the word *faith*.

Under “faith” is written John 3:36, “Whoever believes in the Son has eternal life.”

In contrast to legalism, grace has no rules, code, or ritual. It is an invitation directly from the heart of God simply to believe and receive.

It has no price tag. Paul states in another passage, “For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God—not by works, so that no one can boast” (Eph. 2:8–9).

Yes, legalism and grace are the two bags that rest on the counter of life.

While the legalists may claim that their bag is full of wealth, in all reality, it is just an old bag with the frustration of Self effort.

The good news is that the wealth is found in grace.

The bag of grace is full of forgiveness, joy, and eternal life. Which bag have you picked up?

Which bag is in your possession? Legalism or grace?

It will be a sad surprise to reach heaven's gate to find that your bag is full of worthless legalism.

It will be a sad plight to enter eternity utterly destitute.

All religion, apart from grace, is worthless legalism.

Beware! Which bag is yours?

Now, to return to Galatians 3:10

Translation.

For as many as are of the works of the law, are under curse. For it stands written, Cursed is every one who is not remaining constantly in all things which stand written in the book of the law in order to do them.

Galatians 3:10