

ROMANS: PART 41
JUNE 9, 1996

Theories of Christian Growth
Romans 8:12-14

Legalism

1. **Strengths:** We should seek to do God's Law. It defines holiness.
2. **Reasons why Legalism is inadequate:** (Rom 7:14-24; 14:23; Mk 7:18-23)
 - ◆ God's Law imparts no ability to do what it commands. It merely sets the standard.
 - ◆ A Legalist often lives under a terrible burden of guilt/shame. He must pretend to be holy.
 - ◆ Or he must redefine holiness down to a level that he can achieve (I.E. Man-made rules).
 - ◆ The focus inevitably is on external compliance (E.G. Pharisees) not motives, faith, love.
 - ◆ Legalists tend to confuse sanctification with justification. Holiness = basis of justification.
 - ◆ It is based upon pride & produces pride.
 - ◆ In the final analysis, legalism destroys true holiness.

Ritualism & Sacramentalist Theology

1. **Strengths:** We should love the Biblical sacraments. They can be of great spiritual value to a Christian (when received in faith).
2. **Reasons why Sacramentalism is inadequate:** (Rom 4:10,11; Psm 51:16,17; Mt 6:1-18)
 - ◆ Ritualism redefines holiness down to a level that one can achieve thru the sacraments.
 - ◆ The focus inevitably is on external compliance (E.G. Pharisees) not motives, faith, love.
 - ◆ God's sacraments, in & of themselves, impart no holiness.
 - ◆ These things tend to become confused with the person of Christ
 - ◆ Twentieth-century Evangelicals are very close to becoming Sacramentalist.
 - ◆ It destroys true holiness.

Asceticism & Monastic Theology

1. **Strengths:** We must realize that we are not to be *of this world*. Christians in America are far too worldly & materialistic. We are a *called out* people.
2. **Reasons why these are inadequate:** (Col 2:20-23; Jn 17:11-18; I Cor 5:9f; Gal 5:12)
 - ◆ Asceticism seeks to change the heart through severe self-denial.
 - ◆ Monasticism seeks to escape temptation by withdrawing from the world altogether.
 - ◆ Christ's mandate was *not be of the world*. Not go *out* of the world, or *set back* the world.
 - ◆ These things tend to become confused with the meritorious sufferings of Christ
 - ◆ These things redefine holiness down to externals that one can achieve through sheer force of the will. The focus is off motives, faith, love.
 - ◆ These things, in & of themselves, impart no holiness. Indeed, they destroy true holiness.

Formulaism & Keswick/Holiness Theology, Pentecostal Theology

1. **Strengths:**
 - ◆ We need the Holy Spirit to live as Christians
 - ◆ We need to commit ourselves to God & the holy life to which He has called us.
2. **Reasons why Formulaism is inadequate:** (Rom 6:3-4; Phil 2:12,13; No formula in NT!)
 - ◆ It wrongly asserts there is a "*higher victorious living*" available upon our commitment.
 - ◆ It separates Justification from Sanctification. Christ's Saviorhood from His Lordship.
 - ◆ It substitutes a concocted formula for the true means of grace.
 - ◆ It usually takes a passive view of human responsibility in living out the Christian life.
 - ◆ It lowers God's holiness & Law, advances Arminianism, & takes a mystical view of Bible.
 - ◆ It produces pride (in those who think they're *victorious*), confusion (when it doesn't work), depression (when it fails in the sincere believer), and dysfunctional living (as those who continue to hold to it are forced to redefine reality).
 - ◆ In the final analysis, Formulaism destroys true holiness.

Emotionalism & 2nd Blessing Theology

1. Strengths:

- ◆ We *should* love the Lord with all our *heart*, soul, mind, & strength.
- ◆ We *should* seek to have a close personal moment-by-moment relationship w/ the Spirit.

2. Reasons why Emotionalism is inadequate: (Prov 19:2; Rom 10:2; Verses given above under Formulaism; I Cor 12:7,12-25,30)

- ◆ It alleges that one can become holy thru: tongues, prophecy, Spirit baptism, etc.
- ◆ It substitutes emotional experience for the true means of grace.
- ◆ It can blind one to his true spiritual condition. It can keep him from true self-examination.
- ◆ It makes the same mistakes found in Formulaism.
- ◆ In the final analysis, Emotionalism destroys true holiness.

Intellectualism

1. Strengths:

- ◆ We must know the Scripture in order to grow in faith.
- ◆ We should study the Scripture to show ourselves approved & avoid false doctrine.
- ◆ We must love Him with our mind.

2. Reasons why Intellectualism is inadequate: (Rom 2:20; I Cor 8:1,2; 13:2; II Tim 3:5-10)

- ◆ It assumes that knowing data about God is the same thing as knowing God.
- ◆ It produces pride, arrogance, division, criticism, self-centeredness, shallow religion
- ◆ It fails to produce faith, love, humility, joy, worship, compassion, obedience, etc.
- ◆ In the final analysis, Intellectualism destroys true holiness.

Antinomianism & The Carnal Christian Doctrine

1. Strengths: It is true that the Law alone cannot make us holy. We should experience a deep sense of freedom from the Law's condemnation. Also the Carnal Christian doctrine recognizes that Christians indeed sin, and can let sin reign in their lives.

2. Reasons why these theories are inadequate: Rom 6:3-14; 8:12,13; Phil 1:6; Heb 12:14.

- ◆ It gives many wicked people the illusion that they are saved because of a mere profession of faith.
- ◆ He saved us to make us holy -- not just to get us into heaven. Eph 2:10; Titus 2:14.
- ◆ Christ is Savior & Lord. You cannot have Him partially.
- ◆ Sanctification is a necessary result of justification.
- ◆ It leads to apathy. Lethargic believers are not taught to fear God.
- ◆ One may fall into sin, but Christ will always discipline His child because He is his Lord.

A Biblical View of Sanctification. Rom 8:12-14; Phil 2:12,13

1. We have an *obligation* -- to live a holy life. (Human responsibility)
2. We *put to death* the deeds of the flesh. (Human activity)
3. We put to death the deeds of the flesh *by the Holy Spirit*. (Divine ability)
4. We are *led* by the Spirit. (Divine Sovereignty)
5. We serve as *sons of God*. (A Position of security & the motive of love)
6. We need Scripture, sacraments, fellowship, prayer, Church. (The means of grace)