

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)