



THE LENEXA EDIFIER

John 8:32 And ye shall know the truth and the truth shall make you free.

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KEEP HOPE ALIVE

Jim Stauffer

A young boy is playing catch with his father in the backyard and dreams of someday playing in the Major Leagues. As he increases in age and stature he continues to hone his skills and is encouraged by his coaches to the point he has a hope of realizing that young boy's dream. It is from this point forward the young man begins to relish the idea of practice and the hard work necessary to elevate his skills to a level comparable to those professionals he wishes to join. He hopes to play baseball professionally and that hope spurs him to achieve his potential.

The apostle Paul, speaking to the Colossians said, **Col. 1:3** *We give thanks to God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, praying always for you, 4 since we heard of your faith in Christ Jesus and the love which you have for all the saints; 5 because of the hope laid up for you in heaven, of which you previously heard in the word of truth, the gospel.*

The process is hearing the gospel, developing faith in Christ which naturally leads to loving the brethren who share in the hope you now have. The hope one has as a result of his faith in Christ comes from the largess of God who sent Jesus to die for us, thus extending His gracious redemption to sinful man. That cannot be stated more clearly than Paul does in the letter to the Romans, **Rom. 5:1** *Therefore, having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, 2 through whom also we have obtained our introduction by faith into this grace in which we stand; and we exult in hope of the glory of God.*

This hope is so strong it will allow us to endure all the trials of life. It indeed enabled the apostle to remain faithful to that hope in spite of the difficulties and specific suffering he lists in **2 Cor. 11**. It is so powerful, Peter says we can proudly proclaim it in the face of threatened persecution. **1 Pet. 3:15** *but sanctify Christ as Lord in your hearts, always being ready to make a defense to everyone who asks you to give an account for the hope that is in you, yet with gentleness and reverence.*

Like the young man longing to play baseball

professionally this hope of eternal salvation is so strong we will gladly give our ultimate effort to sustain it and to fulfill it.

I am amazed at many of us who seek those eternal habitations in God's heavenly kingdom and yet agonize over the conditions of our temporal residence in the kingdoms of men. We often conduct ourselves as if our most precious assets are affected by who wins an election. Maybe, just maybe, that is because they are our most prized possessions. Maybe we need to reevaluate our hopes and determine if they are still the hopes associated with faith in Christ or if they are the hopes of temporal happiness in our earthly life.

Each year when our children and grandchildren come home for the holidays, it is more enjoyable than the previous year. As the grandchildren add another year and go through the changes of maturity, it is a pleasure to observe their development. We naturally have high hopes for them in their education and further development. We are pleased with the careers of their parents and any and all successes each of their families achieve. But this is not the hope that will propel us to do all God and Christ have asked of us. In fact, this hope can actually get in the way of a greater hope if we do not keep our eye on the prize (**Phil. 3:14**).

We will not serve them or ourselves best by focusing too heavily on events that only affect life here. We must be the proper example to them by recognizing any and all accomplishments while here are still minor compared to the goal of eternity with the Lord.

I wonder how many young men have had to relinquish their hopes of a professional baseball career? I am sure it is a very high number simply because it is a very specific skill set that must be honed to the very highest of levels. They then must move on to something else and develop different goals for this life.

One of the great things about eternal hope is there is no greater hope or reward. Even though it is the greatest hope and reward it has one other aspect that cannot be matched. It is available to every person who seeks the comfort of His love (**Mat. 11:28-30**).

The Tenth Commandment

And now we come to the finale of the Decalogue, the last of the great commandments written by the finger of God on the two tables of stone Moses brought back from the mountain of Horeb, **Exodus 31:18**. This commandment reads: Thou shalt not covet. (**Exodus 20:17**) God enumerates several examples of what not to covet, but the root of it all is covetousness, and that is what God is condemning. It matters not what it may be, do not covet it. This does not mean, however, that we are not to desire things which we may rightfully have as our own. We are not to desire these things beyond the will of God. Let me explain. Almost everyone would like to have more money in the bank. I certainly would (Never wave money in front of most preachers or any politician!) I am to take this desire to the Lord in prayer and then I am to go about doing what I must do in order to accomplish this goal. I cut my expenses without shortchanging my rightful obligations. I work harder, smarter and longer without ignoring other responsibilities. I deny myself frivolities, and I wind up with more money in the bank. That is going about it God's way, within God's will. I may go about all these things and yet not have more money because of unexpected events. God allowed that to come into my life for a reason, whether I understand or not is not important. So be it! This is desire within God's will.

A covetous man will cut corners on responsibilities, play the lottery or even steal and cheat in order to gather more money. This is outside of God's will and not acceptable to the true servant of God.

Cleveland Reddinger

What Are We Seeking

By Gary Henry (from wordpoints.com)?

“. . . always learning and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth” (2 Timothy 3:7).

THERE IS A CERTAIN SATISFACTION IN COMING TO KNOW THINGS THAT WE'VE NEVER UNDERSTOOD BEFORE. Whether it's pride (the perverse pleasure that comes from knowing things not widely known by others) or it's simply the natural pleasure we feel when we make progress, it feels good to learn new things. We need to be careful, however. If our intent is to seek God, we must seek more than the simple pleasure of knowledge by itself.

We live in an age that seems uncertain about the whole idea of truth. The very word "truth" is often placed in quotation marks, as if it were a quaint notion no longer taken seriously, except by old-fashioned folk and fundamentalists. In such an age, it is interesting that we still prize "learning" as much as we do. One can't help but remember Paul's description of certain ones who

were *"always learning and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth."* When we seek to learn, we must seek more than the acquirement of various perspectives. It is actual truth that we seek, and if our minds are open (as they certainly should be), it is only that we may close them again on something solid.

But it is even more than truth that we should seek. We should seek to obey whatever truth we acquire. A real relationship with God is an active affair that involves not merely knowing but doing. On one occasion, Jesus brought His listeners up short with this statement: *"Why do you call Me 'Lord, Lord,' and do not do the things which I say?" (Luke 6:46)*. True seekers are not content until their knowledge has moved them to godly action. What is learned in the library must be lived in the neighborhood.

One of the best antidotes to pride is the sobering fact that knowledge involves both greater responsibility and greater accountability. The more we know, the more God will expect of us. *"For everyone to whom much is given,"* Jesus said, *"from him much will be required"* (**Luke 12:48**). Even if we've sought to unlock every subtle mystery in the world, that will not exempt us from what God has always required: a faith that acts.

"You can be sure of this: when the Day of Judgment comes, we shall not be asked what we have read, but what we have done; not how well we have spoken, but how well we have lived" (Thomas à Kempis).

Sterling Avenue church of Christ

It's Hard, but Love Demands It

There are some difficult things that God commands us to do. It's hard, for example, to go to a brother or sister who has sinned, look them in the eye, and tell them that they must repent. It would be much easier to simply "look the other way", but God says we must go to them (**Luke 17:3**). It's hard to approach a weak Christian, point out their serious neglect of duty, and urge them to turn back to God. It would be easier to just "let it slide", but God says we must speak to them (**Gal. 6:1**). It's hard to finally withdraw yourself from a disciple who has sinned and refuses to repent. It would be easier to ignore the situation and act as though nothing had happened, but God says such action must be taken (**1 Tim. 6:3-5**). To all of you who obediently do these difficult things, we express our thanks and admiration. You are truly *"the salt of the earth"* and *"the light of the world"* (**Matt. 5:13-16**).

Now, may we say a word to those of you who might be on the receiving end of such actions? We hope that you understand that your brothers and sisters take no delight in doing such things. It gives them no perverse

sense of pleasure. There is no morbid gratification that comes from this. Surely you can see that it is truly difficult. Your fellow Christians can think of a thousand things they would rather be doing. There is absolutely no enjoyment in this. But they do it anyway, because they know two things: 1) God commands them to do so, and 2) It is in your best interest. Please try to understand this, and if it becomes necessary for someone to come to you - in a conscientious effort to serve God and you - please respect them for it. Respect them, appreciate them, and love them for their deep concern for your soul. They are doing one of the really hard things that God calls upon His people to do – and love demands it.
by Greg Gwin, The Beacon Electronic Edition

What Does Legalism Mean?

Currently, "legalism" is a popular subject. But just exactly what is meant by "legalism"? We often are made to wonder if all those who firmly preach anti-legalism are agreed as to the meaning of legalism?

Let us consider three possible meanings of the term in question. By so doing, we can determine the scripturalness or unscripturalness of each legalism:

(1) Does legalism mean strict adherence to God's law? If this is the meaning of the term, it represents a scriptural principle. Jesus told His disciples: *"What things soever ye shall bind on earth shall be bound in heaven . . ."*

(Matt. 16:19 and 18:18). To this end the *"Spirit of truth"* came to guide them unto all the truth **(John 16:13)**. In this sense Jesus and His ambassadors were legalists. But where does this place the anti-legalists? It puts them in direct opposition to the authority of Christ.

Furthermore, this meaning of legalism renders the anti-legalist a double-minded man. He refuses to accept the idea that anything is bound in religion - with one major exception, anti-legalism! He reminds us of the skeptic who says that the only possible truth is the truth that there can be no possible truth! (?) So if the doctrine of legalism is defined as "strict adherence to God's law," it is scripturally sound. Let modern thinkers (?) say what they will, it is still God's will that, *"This is the end of the matter: all hath been heard: fear God and keep his commandments; for this is the whole duty of man"* **(Eccl. 12:13)**.

(2) If legalism is the disposition to make laws where God has made none, it is unscriptural. Consistent with the statement of Jesus cited above **(Matt. 16:19 and 18:18)**, it is unscriptural to bind law when such has not been bound in heaven (and thus recorded in the New Testament). In this case, all who believe in and submit to the supreme authority of God's word are anti-legalists! That is to say, we are opposed to making and binding laws not bound in heaven. This type of legalism is a form of unbelief in that it assumes that God's laws do not go far enough.

(3) If legalism is depending on works of merit in order to be saved, legalism is unscriptural. This meaning of legalism is closely connected to the second, but not entirely the same. One might depend on added law for salvation (as with circumcision in **Acts 15** and the Galatian letter), or one might regard the New Testament as a book of rules which one must keep perfectly in order to earn salvation. In both cases this type of legalism is firmly denied in the New Testament. *"For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: not of works, lest any man should boast"* **(Eph. 2:8, 9)**. See also **Acts 15; Gal. 2:16 and 3:21; and Rom. 8:3**.

At this point many become confused. Realizing that we are saved by *"the free gift of God"* **(Rom. 6:23)**, it is assumed that any conditions would nullify grace. Thus the assumed principle: any free gift is received apart from any effort. This is both unreasonable and unscriptural. Think about it the next time you submit an application or agree to a 'trial offer' in order to receive a 'free' gift. You have not earned that gift but have merely availed yourself of a favor. So it is when we obey the gospel.

Again, those who believe what God's word sets forth on the matter of grace, are anti-legalist in this third sense. We object to the idea that man can earn his salvation. Such a doctrine makes void the cross of our Lord. However, at the same time we must affirm that God's grace is received by man's obedience. Thus Peter wrote: *"Seeing ye have purified your souls in obeying the truth . . ."* **(1 Pet. 1:22)**.

The subject of 'legalism' needs our careful investigation. We need to be as precise as possible when we employ terms that might have varied meanings. As in all things, tell us exactly what you mean, then we can search the Scriptures to see if these things are so. Will the real anti-legalists please stand up-and tell us what you mean?

by Warren E. Berkley

To the brethren at Lenexa church of Christ:
Emmanuel Larrea is a young man recently added to our number at Lenexa and is currently pursuing his education at the Cleveland Chiropractic College. Typical of most college students he is in need of extra income. Any who have jobs needing done should contact him as he has considerable experience at odd jobs around the house.

Eph. 2:19 So then ye are no more strangers and sojourners, but ye are fellow-citizens with the saints, and of the household of God, 20 being built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus himself being the chief corner stone; 21 in whom each several building, fitly framed together, groweth into a holy temple in the Lord;

1Pet. 2:9 But ye are an elect race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for God's own possession, that ye may show forth the excellencies of him who called you out of darkness into his marvellous light:

Psa. 1:1 Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the wicked, Nor standeth in the way of sinners, Nor sitteth in the seat of scoffers: 2 But his delight is in the law of Jehovah; And on his law doth he meditate day and night. 3 And he shall be like a tree planted by the streams of water, That bringeth forth its fruit in its season, Whose leaf also doth not wither; And whatsoever he doeth shall prosper. 4 The wicked are not so, But are like the chaff which the wind driveth away. 5 Therefore the wicked shall not stand in the judgment, Nor sinners in the congregation of the righteous. 6 For Jehovah knoweth the way of the righteous; But the way of the wicked shall perish.

HOURS OF WORSHIP

Sunday A.M. 9:30 Bible Study

Sunday A.M. 10:20 Assembled Worship

Sunday P.M. 5:00 Assembled Worship

Wednesday P.M. 7:00 Bible Study and Worship

Visitors welcome

We conduct in home Bible Studies

We offer Correspondence Courses

Evangelist and Editor Jim Stauffer

Elders: Ron Peck and Jim Stauffer

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NEWS AND NOTES: REMEMBER THE SICK IN PRAYERS AND VISITS. J.R. DANIEL, JAN PATRICK, AND L.A. STAUFFER. THE FATHER OF EMALI PRICE, STEPHEN KIMKER, HAS A CHRONIC ILLNESS THAT IS DEBILITATING AT TIMES. HE NEEDS OUR PRAYERS.

SUNDAY MORNING BIBLE CLASS:
CHRISTIAN PARENTING - RON PECK

WEDNESDAY BIBLE CLASS: THE BOOK OF ROMANS - J STAUFFER

SUNDAY SERMON:
LIVING FOR THE WILL OF GOD



What Must I Do To Be Saved?

Hear the gospel - Romans 10:17

Believe in Jesus Christ - Hebrews 11:6

Repent of sins - Acts 17:30

Confess Christ as Lord - Romans 10:9,10

Be Baptized for remission of sins Acts 2:38

Be Faithful unto death - Revelation 2:10