

## ULC Sermon Study Resource

*Idols - Legalism*

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**Prayer:** Pause for a few moments to go to the Lord in prayer. Ask that He would draw near to you in this time, and open your heart and mind to hear His Word.

**Icebreaker:** What's the worst haircut you ever had?

**Reading:** Galatians 2:15-21

### Outline:

- I. Legalism is Hypocrisy (v. 15-16)
  - a. Legalism is any ideology that makes performance the prerequisite for acceptance.
  - b. When we employ legalism, we place new demands on top of the Gospel. We demand things of others that we cannot accomplish ourselves.  
**Q: Why can none of us satisfy the demands of legalism?**
- II. Legalism is Enslavement (v. 17-18)
  - a. A return to the constant demands of the Law would be a return to enslavement.
  - b. When we build a system that says you can get to God by works, we will never be able to do enough. Legalism will always demand more from us.  
**Q: What would enslavement to the law look like?**
- III. The Gospel is Freedom (v. 19-21)
  - a. Life with the Gospel allows us to embrace a new reality, that grace is a gift we receive.
  - b. If our righteousness is not based on the law, we are free from despair and the self-righteousness of legalism.  
**Q: What does it mean that our righteousness is a gift?**

### Reflection/Application Questions:

- 1) Is there a legalistic ideology that you find yourself upholding from time to time? Can you think of examples of legalism within and outside of Christianity?
- 2) Why is it difficult at times to recognize legalistic thinking and prevent it?
- 3) Do you think there is a link between feeling enslaved to legalism and mental health?
- 4) Have you been working to fulfill some type of Law in your life? Are you trying to earn something?
- 5) How does the idea of freedom from legalism make you feel? Is it easy for you to accept this gift?

### Suggestions for further study:

- Luke 15:28-32 **Q: How is the idea of legalism related to the parable here?**
- Eph. 2:8-9 **Q: How does this verse echo the message that the gospel is freedom?**
- John 6:28-29 **Q: What does this tell us about righteous works?**

### Closing Prayer:

Father, we spend far too much time trying to earn approval from you or the world. We spend our time working for the gift you have already given to us by sending Jesus. Help us to fix our eyes on Him, that we would come to fully understand that Jesus is our righteousness. Open our hearts to receive the grace that was poured out when you sent your Son. In Jesus' name we pray, Amen.