

MARK

RELATIONSHIP and PERFORMANCE

1. "THE PARABLE OF THE LIFESAVING STATION"

2. REVIEW OF LEGALISM

- A. REMEMBER: THERE IS A TENDANCY TOWARD LEGALISM IN MANY OF US.
- B. LEGALISM: IT IS AN ATTITUDE OF AUTHORITARIANISM... A DESIRE TO CONTROL OTHER PEOPLE BY ENFORCING AN EXHAUSTIVE LIST OF DO'S AND DON'TS THAT ATTEMPTS TO DEFINE WHICH EXTERNAL BEHAVIORS ARE CONSIDERED ACCEPTABLE BY THE LEGALISTS.
- C. NOTE: THE PHARISEES WERE LEGALISTS.
 - 1. THEY WERE BOTH RELIGIOUS AND POLITICAL LEADERS OF THE JEWISH PEOPLE, AND THEY ATTEMPTED TO CONTROL THEM BY "ENFORCING AN EXHAUSTIVE LIST OF DO'S AND DON'TS".
 - a. 365 DO'S AND 248 DON'TS!
- D. QUESTION: HOW DOES LEGALISM GAIN A FOOTHOLD IN SO MANY CHRISTIAN'S LIVES?
 - 1. FIRST: BY FEAR AND INTIMIDATION FROM THOSE WHO ARE IN POSITIONS OF AUTHORITY... BECAUSE LEGALISTS ARE QUICK TO AMPUTATE THOSE WHO DO NOT ACCEPT THEIR AUTHORITY!
 - 2. SECOND: THE DESIRE TO BE ACCEPTED BY ONE'S PEERS.
 - 3. THIRD: IGNORANCE OF THE SCRIPTURES.
 - 4. FOURTH: HESITATION TO CONFRONT MANIPULATORS AND FIGHT FOR ONE'S FREEDOM.
- E. TRUTH: THERE ARE SOME GOOD REASONS WHY YOU MAY CHOOSE TO DO, OR NOT DO, SOME THINGS THAT LEGALISTS REQUIRE... HOWEVER THAT IS A PERSONAL CONVICTION, NOT A BIBLICAL PROHIBITION.
 - 1. NOTE: IT IS LEGALISTIC TO EXPECT OTHER CHRISTIANS TO FOLLOW YOUR PERSONAL CONVICTIONS.
- F. CONSIDER: LEGALISM IN CHURCHES OFTEN KEEPS THE VERY PEOPLE GOD CHARGES US TO REACH... AWAY FROM COMING!
 - 1. MANY NON-CHRISTIANS ARE TURNED OFF BY THE CHURCH BECAUSE OF JUDGEMENTAL MAN-MADE REGULATIONS.
- G. CONTRAST: BETWEEN LEGALISM (RELIGION) AND A RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD THROUGH HIS SON, JESUS CHRIST.
 - 1. IN CONTRAST TO LEGALISM, THE BIBLE EMPHASIZES A PERSONAL RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD THAT IS CHARACTERIZED BY FAITH, LOVE, AND OBEDIENCE THAT FLOWS

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FROM A TRANSFORMED HEART... NOT FROM OBEDIENCE TO MAN-MADE REGULATIONS WHICH IS RELIGION.

a. A RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD IS MADE POSSIBLE THROUGH JESUS CHRIST, WHO RECONCILES HUMANITY TO GOD.

H. THE NEW TESTAMENT FREQUENTLY HIGHLIGHTS THE IMPORTANCE OF THE RELATIONAL ASPECT OF FAITH.

1. John 15:4-5 (NASB)

"Abide in Me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself unless it abides in the vine, so neither can you unless you abide in Me. "I am the vine, you are the branches; he who abides in Me and I in him, he bears much fruit, for apart from Me you can do nothing.

2. DISCUSS: WHAT THE WORD "ABIDE" MEANS TO YOU.

3. GOD WANTS A RELATIONSHIP... NOT, A PERFORMANCE TO A SET OF RULES!

A. GOD IS MORE INTERESTED IN WHO WE ARE THAN IN WHAT WE DO.

1. IMPORTANT: THAT DOES NOT MEAN THAT GOD IS NOT INTERESTED IN WHAT WE DO!

a. IT IS THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN THE BE ATTITUDES AND THE DO ATTITUDES.

2. ONCE WE ENTER INTO A RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD THROUGH FAITH IN JESUS CHRIST, IT CAN BE EASY FOR US TO FOLLOW A LIST OF RULES IN ORDER TO TRY TO KEEP GOD'S FAVOR.

a. SOMETIMES CHURCHES ENCOURAGE LEGALISM.

1) WHEN THE SHIFT IN ORGANIZED RELIGION GOES FROM RELATIONSHIP TO RITUAL... THE RESULT IS MEANINGLESS REPETITION.

2) THAT IS NOT WHAT GOD INTENDS... WE CAN NOT BE SAVED OR BE MADE HOLY BY WHAT WE DO.

B. TRUTH: IN THE NEW TESTAMENT JESUS AND HIS MINISTRY WAS CHARACTERIZED BY RELATIONSHIPS WITH PEOPLE.

1. NO ONE WAS EXCLUDED FROM HIS INVITATION TO A RELATIONSHIP WITH HIM!

C. NOTE: FRIENDSHIP WITH GOD BEGINS AT A SALVATION, BUT LIKE HUMAN RELATIONSHIPS, CLOSENESS TAKES T-I-M-E.

1. WE CAN'T EXPECT TO GROW CLOSER TO GOD IF WE ONLY TALK TO HIM ONCE A WEEK AT SUNDAY SERVICES.

2. AND CAN'T EXPECT TO HAVE MUCH OF AN IN-DEPTH RELATIONSHIP WITH HIM IF THE ONLY TIME WE EARNESTLY PRAY IS DURING A TIME OF CRISIS.

3. NOR CAN WE EXPECT TO HAVE MUCH OF A RELATIONSHIP WITH HIM IF WE RARELY READ THE MESSAGES TO US FOUND IN HIS WORD.

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D. **GROWING CLOSER** IN OUR **RELATIONSHIP** WITH **GOD** **MUST** BE A **DAY-BY-DAY, MOMENT-BY-MOMENT** THING WITH US... IT TAKES **T-I-M-E**.

1. THAT MEANS **DEVOTING** OURSELVES TO **DEVELOPING** OUR **RELATIONSHIP** WITH **GOD** WITH THE **SAME** **INTENTION** THAT WE **PURSUE** **EARTHLY** **RELATIONSHIPS**:

- a. MARRIAGE.
- b. CHILDREN AND GRANDCHILDREN.
- c. FRIENDS.

E. **TRUTH: WE GROW CLOSER** IN OUR **RELATIONSHIP** WITH **GOD** **WHEN**:

- 1. WE SPEND **T-I-M-E** WITH HIM IN **PPRAYER**.
- 2. WE SPEND **T-I-M-E** WITH HIM IN THE **STUDY** OF HIS **WORD**.
- 3. **DISCUSS: WHAT THAT LOOKS LIKE?**

F. **NOTE: ONE FRINGE BENEFIT** OF COMING TO **KNOW** **GOD** **BETTER** IS THAT WE **BECOME MORE LIKE HIM**.

1. AND... WHEN WE **BECOME** **MORE LIKE** **HIM** WE **BEGIN** TO **BEAR** **FRUIT** **FOR** **HIM**:

- a. **John 15:5 (NASB)** "I am the vine, you are the branches; **he who abides in Me and I in him, he bears much fruit**, for apart from Me you can do nothing.

G. **FACT: ALL BELIEVERS HAVE A RELATIONSHIP** WITH **GOD** **THROUGH** **JESUS CHRIST**...

QUESTION: WHAT KIND OF A RELATIONSHIP IS IT?

- 1. "IF YOU BELIEVE IN JESUS CHRIST AS YOUR SAVIOR, YOU ARE A CHILD OF GOD, BUT... **WHAT KIND OF A CHILD** ARE YOU? DO YOU **BARELY KNOW** YOUR HEAVENLY FATHER, **OR** ARE YOU **GROWING CLOSER** TO HIM? DO YOU SEE **LITTLE TANGIBLE CHANGE** IN YOUR LIFE, **OR** ARE YOU IN THE **STEADY PROCESS** OF BECOMING **MORE LIKE HIM?**"

– DON ANDERSON

4. **EIGHT RESULTS OF A RELATIONSHIP** WITH **GOD** **THROUGH** **HIS SON, JESUS CHRIST**:

A. **Romans 5:1-11 (NASB)** Therefore, having been justified by faith, we have **peace** with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, 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. And not only this, but we also exult in our **tribulations**, knowing that tribulation brings about perseverance; and perseverance, proven character; and proven character, hope; and hope does not disappoint, because the **love** of God has been poured out within our hearts through **the Holy Spirit** who was given to us. For while we were still helpless, at the right time Christ died for the ungodly. For one will hardly die for a righteous man; though perhaps for the good man someone would dare even to die. But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. Much more then, having now been justified by His blood, we shall be **saved** from the wrath of God through Him. For if while we were enemies we were reconciled to God

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through the death of His Son, much more, having been reconciled, we shall be saved by His life. And not only this, but we also **exult** in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now received the reconciliation.

- B. **ONE: PEACE** — **Romans 5:1** Therefore, **since we have been made right in God's sight by faith**, we have **peace with God** because of what Jesus Christ has done for us.

1. **NOTICE: PAUL DOES NOT SAY THAT AS CHRISTIANS WE HAVE THE PEACE OF GOD, BUT PEACE WITH GOD.**

a. THEY ARE **TWO DIFFERENT THINGS**: THE PEACE "**OF**" GOD IS **TEMPORARY**, IT **COMES AND GOES**, **DEPENDING ON HOW MUCH WE'RE WILLING TO TRUST GOD IN OUR PRESENT CIRCUMSTANCES.**

b. PEACE "**WITH**" GOD IS **ENTIRELY DIFFERENT SITUATION.**

1) SOMEONE MIGHT SAY, "I'VE **MADE MY PEACE WITH GOD.**"

2) HOWEVER, PEACE "**WITH**" GOD **DOESN'T WORK THAT WAY... IT IS A GIFT.**

3) WE **DON'T MAKE IT... IT IS A GIFT FROM GOD AT THE MOMENT WE RECEIVE CHRIST AS OUR SAVIOR.**

4) PEACE "**WITH**" GOD IS **PERMANENT**, A FIXED **CHANGE** IN OUR **POSITION FROM SINNER TO SAVED.**

2. **TWO: ACCESS** — **Romans 5:2 (NASB)** 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.

3. THE **ORIGINAL GREEK** SUGGESTS **TWO DEFINITIONS** FOR THE WORD "**INTRODUCTION**":

a. **ONE**, IT MEANS **INTRODUCTION** INTO THE **PRESENCE OF ROYALTY.**

b. **SECOND**, IT IMPLIES THE **TRANSFORMATION** WHEN A **SHIP**, WHICH HAS BEEN **OUT ON THE STORM-TOSSED SEA**, **ARRIVES SAFELY AT HARBOR** WHERE THE **SHIP RESTS IN CALM AND PEACEFUL WATER.**

4. **NON-BELIEVERS** ARE LIKE **SHIPS** THAT ARE **BANTERED AND BUFFETED** BY THE **RAGING WINDS** AND **VICIOUS WAVES** OF THIS **WORLD.**

a. **HOWEVER**, **CHRISTIANS CAN** BE IN A **POSITION OF SAFETY**, LIKE **SHIPS** IN A **HARBOR** THAT ARE **SAFE FROM STORMS... OR BE IN A POSITION TO GROW SPIRITUALLY** FROM THE **STORMS OF LIFE.**

1) WE MAY BE **KNOCKED AROUND** BY THE **WINDS AND WAVES OF LIFE**: WE'LL **LOSE OUR JOBS, BURY OUR LOVED ONES, SUFFER ILLNESS, BUT WE HAVE AVAILABLE** TO US THE **PEACE OF GOD**. AND NOT ONLY THAT BUT OUR **ULTIMATE DESTINATION, HEAVEN, IS THE SAFEST HARBOR IMAGINABLE!**

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- C. **THREE: HOPE** — Romans 5:2b (NASB) and we exult in hope of the glory of God.
1. AS BELIEVERS: WE ARE AT PEACE “WITH” GOD; WE HAVE ACCESS TO HIM, AND WE CAN “EXULT IN HOPE OF THE GLORY OF GOD”.
 2. FOR BELIEVERS “HOPE OF THE GLORY OF GOD” IS THE ETERNAL CONTINUATION OF OUR RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD IN HEAVEN THAT BEGAN IN FAITH ON EARTH.
- D. **FOUR: TRIBULATION/TRIALS** — Romans 5:3-4 (NASB) And not only this, but we also exult in our tribulations, knowing that tribulation brings about perseverance; and perseverance, proven character; and proven character, hope;
1. James 1:2-4 (NASB) Consider it all joy, my brethren, when you encounter various trials, knowing that the testing of your faith produces endurance. And let endurance have its perfect result (SANCTIFICATION), so that you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing.
 2. “THROUGH IT ALL” - ANDRE CROUCH
 - a. “I thank God for the mountains,
and I thank Him for the valleys,
I thank Him for the storms He brought me through.
For if I'd never had a problem,
I wouldn't know God could solve them,
I'd never know what faith in God could do.”
 3. **REMEMBER: GOD ALLOWS TROUBLE/TRIALS SO CHRISTIANS CAN MATURE SPIRITUALLY = SANCTIFICATION.**
- E. **FIVE: LOVE** — Romans 5:5 (NASB) and hope does not disappoint, because the love of God has been poured out within our hearts through the Holy Spirit who was given to us.
1. **GOD'S LOVE IS A REALITY TO CHRISTIANS AND IS THE FIFTH RESULT OF OUR RELATIONSHIP WITH HIM.**
 - a. Romans 5:8 (NASB) But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.
 2. IF YOU'RE A CHRISTIAN WHO IS GROWING IN YOUR RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD, YOU SHOULD BE AWARE OF THE PRESENCE OF GOD'S ABIDING LOVE FOR YOU.
 - a. 1 John 4:16 (NASB) “And we have come to know and have believed the love which God has for us. God is love, and the one who abides in love abides in God, and God abides in him”
- F. **SIX: GOD'S SPIRIT** — Romans 5:5 (NASB) and hope does not disappoint, because the love of God has been poured out within our hearts through the Holy Spirit who was given to us.

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1. SOME BENEFITS OF THE HOLY SPIRIT WHO:
 - a. HELPS ENABLE CHRISTIANS WITH SPIRITUAL GIFTS... LOVE, JOY, PEACE, PATIENCE, KINDNESS, GOODNESS, FAITHFULNESS, GENTLENESS, AND PATIENCE.
 - b. ACTS AS A SEAL GUARANTEEING CHRISTIANS ETERNAL LIFE.
 - c. HELPS CHRISTIANS UNDERSTAND GOD'S WORD.
 - d. INTERCEDES WITH GOD ON BEHALF OF CHRISTIANS.
 - e. ACTS AS HELPER, COMFORTER, AND COUNSELOR FOR CHRISTIANS.
- G. SEVEN: SAFETY — Romans 5:9 (NASB) Much more then, having now been justified by His blood, we shall be saved from the wrath of God through Him.
 1. SAFETY IS THE SEVENTH RESULT OF HAVING A RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD THROUGH JESUS CHRIST.
 2. NO MATTER HOW BAD IT GETS IN THIS WORLD, BELIEVERS ARE IN A POSITION OF SAFETY... WE'LL BE SAVED FROM THE "WRATH" THAT IS TO COME.
 1. REVELATION 6–19 DESCRIBES THE TRIBULATION AS A TIME OF ECONOMIC COLLAPSE, FAMINE, BLOODSHED, AND COSMIC UPHEAVAL. IT WILL BE THE "WRATH OF GOD" POURED OUT FOR SIN.
 - 1) BUT AS BELIEVERS, WE'LL BE SAVED/SAFE FROM GOD'S "WRATH" FOR OUR SINS BECAUSE OF OUR RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD THROUGH JESUS CHRIST AS OUR SUBSTITUTE!
 - 2) IN THE WORDS OF THE POET:
 - 3) ON HIM ALMIGHTY VENGEANCE FELL
THAT WOULD HAVE SUNK A WORLD TO HELL.
HE BORE IT FOR A CHOSEN RACE,
AND THUS BECOMES OUR HIDING PLACE.
- H. EIGHT: JOY BECAUSE OF OUR RECONCILIATION TO GOD — Romans 5:10-11 (NASB) For if while we were enemies we were reconciled to God through the death of His Son, much more, having been reconciled, we shall be saved by His life. And not only this, but we also exult in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now received the reconciliation.
 1. PEACE, ACCESS, HOPE, SPIRITUAL GROWTH THROUGH TRIBULATION, LOVE, THE HOLY SPIRIT, SAFETY FROM WRATH... EACH OF THOSE SEVEN IS A RESULT OF THE MOST IMPORTANT RELATIONSHIP IN LIFE, NOW AND FOREVER.
 2. THE FINAL RESULT OF GROWING IN OUR RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD IS THE JOY WE SHOULD FEEL JUST KNOWING THAT BECAUSE OF JESUS CHRIST WE ARE RECONCILED TO GOD.

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3. CHRISTIANS SHOULD EXPERIENCE JOY AS WE CONSIDER WHO GOD IS, WHAT HE HAS DONE, WHAT HE IS DOING, AND HOPE FOR WHAT HE IS GOING TO DO BECAUSE OF OUR RELATIONSHIP WITH HIM.
5. CONCLUSION: LEGALISM/RELIGION IS OBEYING A SET OF RULES THAT KEEPS MANY CHRISTIANS AND NON-CHRISTIANS AWAY FROM A RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD... WHICH IS THE MOST IMPORTANT RELATIONSHIP OF ALL!