

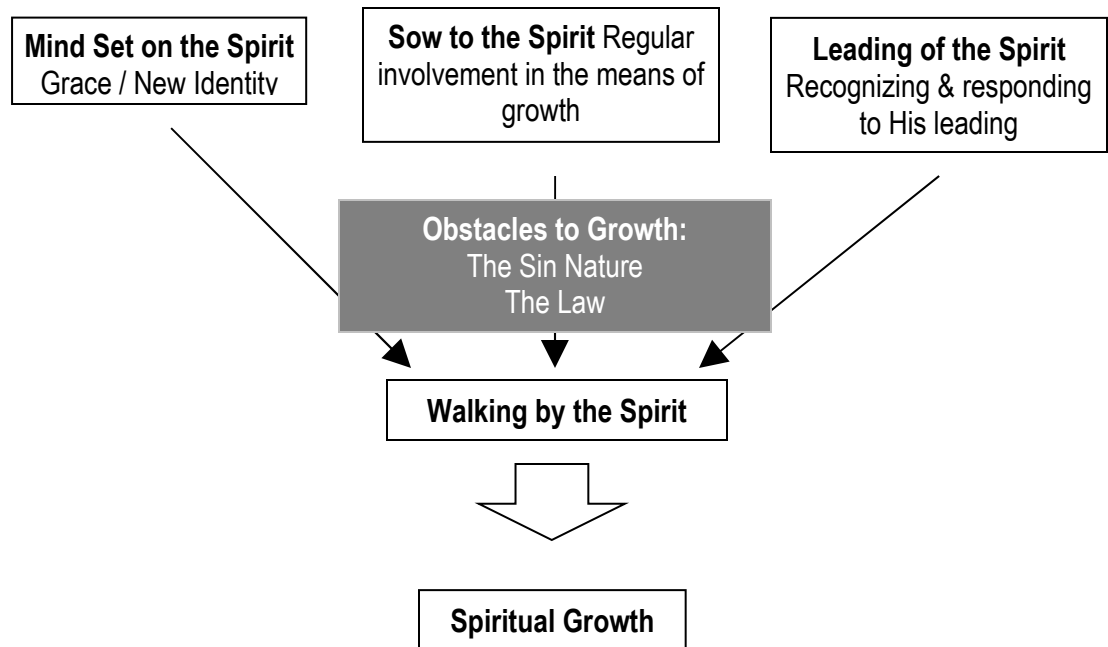
**Xenos Christian Fellowship**  
**Christian Growth**  
**Week 6 - The Role of the Law in Sanctification**

**Overview**

- How do Christians relate to the law?
- Three Components of Mosaic Law
- The Tutorial Purpose of the Moral Law
- Living Under Law vs. Under Grace
- The Many “Faces” of Legalism

**Introduction**

We have said a lot about sanctification: we talked about the importance of doctrine, morals, and biblical love. We have explored the relationship between what we're supposed to do (imperatives) and what God has done (indicatives) and how all that relates to our experience. We also looked at the three aspects of Walking in the Spirit – or our role in tapping into God's transforming power.



Now we are looking at potential barriers or challenges to our walk. Last week we looked at our sin nature. This week we will look at the Law of God – His commands. In and of themselves, God's commands are not bad, but how we relate to them will determine their effect on us.

Note to instructor: You may want to stimulate interest in this topic by reading selected laws from the Old Testament that your students are not observing. For example, see Deut. 22:8,11. Ask them why they don't feel compelled to obey these laws. Who are they to pick and choose which laws they will or will not observe.

### How do Christians relate to the law?

(Romans 7:1-6) Or do you not know, brethren (for I am speaking to those who know the law), that the law has jurisdiction over a person as long as he lives? 2 For the married woman is bound by law to her husband while he is living; but if her husband dies, she is released from the law concerning the husband. 3 So then if, while her husband is living, she is joined to another man, she shall be called an adulteress; but if her husband dies, she is free from the law, so that she is not an adulteress, though she is joined to another man. 4 Therefore, my brethren, you also were made to *die to the Law* through the body of Christ, that you might be joined to another, to Him who was raised from the dead, that we might bear fruit for God. 5 For while we were in the flesh, the sinful passions, which were aroused by the Law, were at work in the members of our body to bear fruit for death. 6 **But now we have been released from the Law, having died to that by which we were bound, so that we serve in newness of the Spirit and not in oldness of the letter.**

#### Two things should be clear from this passage:

- *We no longer have the same relationship with the Law that we had before we came to Christ.* Paul says we have "died to," "been released from" the Law. This is actually another feature of our new identity.
- *Understanding this new relationship to the Law is key to gaining freedom from sin and living effectively for God.<sup>1</sup>*

God's Law itself is good (Rom. 7: 7 What shall we say then? Is the Law sin? May it never be!), and we need to understand its proper role in our lives. However, *relating to* the Law improperly (what Paul calls living "under the Law") is always destructive and is in fact a way of living according to our sinful natures. Therefore, the first half of tonight's class will focus on God's intended purpose for the Law, while the second half will focus on living under the Law.

What is God's purpose for the Law? This is an area of great confusion for Christians, because while the flesh (sin nature) is totally corrupt, the law is more complicated.

### Three Components of the Mosaic Law

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<sup>1</sup> Note the parallelism between this passage (especially 7:4,6) and Romans 6:6,14. In both cases, we have died (to our old self and to the Law), with the result that a new and better quality of life with God is now available to us.

To properly understand the role of the Law in our sanctification, we need to first understand God's Law and its purpose. God did not divide the Law into these three components. They were "braided" together (read Lev. 19:23-34 for an example and note that all three components are present).

### Classification of the Law of Moses

Component And Purpose	Examples	Present Status For Christians
<p><b>Civil:</b> Pragmatic aspects of civil order. To preserve the nation until Messiah came.</p>	<p>National laws: witchcraft &amp; idolatry (considered treason in a theocracy), inheritance laws, penal laws (murder, theft, etc.), health laws (sanitary codes)</p>	<p>Jewish theocracy has been temporarily replaced by national governments during the Church Age (Matt. 22:21; ROM 13:1-7).</p>
<p><b>Ceremonial:</b> Israel's prescribed pattern of rituals for approaching God. To prepare &amp; educate the nation for Messiah's saving work—specifically, the seriousness of sin &amp; substitutionary atonement. To give Israel a distinct culture and national identity.</p>	<p>Sacrificial system (blood sacrifices), religious calendar including sabbath, ritual system (ceremonial uncleanness), circumcision, some health and dietary laws.</p>	<p>Fulfilled by Christ's work on the cross (Heb. 8; Col. 2:16). Sacrifice for sins expressly forbidden (Heb. 10). Ritualism is now set aside for a personal relationship with God (Heb. 7:18,19; Gal. 4:1-11). Dietary &amp; calendar observance are no longer required (Rom. 14:1-5).            Note: There has been a great shift in the way we relate to the law in this area:            1) 100's of rituals to 2            2) lots of detail on how to observe rituals to virtually no details            3) foreshadowing role to commemorative role            Jesus hinted at this change in Jn. 4:23,24.</p>
<p><b>Moral:</b> A description of God's character and ethical will for humanity. To give humanity an absolute morality. To expose their sinfulness &amp; their need for God's grace. To provide the basis for much of the Old Testament civil law (sexual laws, murder, theft, etc.).</p>	<p>Most of the Ten Commandments, including both behaviors (murder, theft, adultery) and internal attitudes (do not covet). The New Testament reiterates these laws.</p>	<p>Christ fulfills its requirements for God's acceptance (Gal. 2:16). The Holy Spirit fulfills it in our lives as we walk with him (Rom. 8:4). The New Testament moral imperatives thus provide a picture of the transformation that God is willing and able to accomplish in our lives.</p>

Summary of our relationship to civil, ceremonial and moral laws:

- **Civil: Not obligated to conform our civil laws to the Old Testament's civil law.**
- **Ceremonial: Not obligated to relate to God through Old Testament ritual observance.**
- **Moral: Not obligated to earn God's acceptance by keeping God's moral laws.**
- **Moral: God wants us to keep his moral law, but not by our own power.**

Paul uses the term "under law" to describe people who are apart from God and under his judgment as well as Christians who misunderstand these important truths about the way we relate to the law.

Let's talk more about God's intended role for the moral law ...

### **The Tutorial Purpose of the Moral Law**

**(Gal. 3:24,25\*) Therefore the Law has become our tutor to lead us to Christ, that we may be justified by faith. But now that faith has come, we are no longer under a tutor**

The "tutorial use" of the Law is a term that stems from Gal. 3:24\*, in which Paul states that "the law has become our tutor to lead us to Christ . . ." The word "**tutor**" (*paidagogos*) refers to "**child-conductors**," or household slaves who were in charge of making their master's children go to school, do their chores, etc. Children under the authority of a task master longed to reach adulthood so they could be free from them.

#### **Why do we need a tutor?**

Humans tend to act out of their sin nature. Before knowing Christ, we are prideful and unwilling to admit our sin and shortcomings. Even as Christians, we do what comes "naturally" to us and try to serve God in our own strength.

The chart below explains how the Law acts as a tutor. It guides non-Christians to their need for forgiveness. It teaches Christians that they can't serve God in their own power and sets them free to serve God in the power of the Spirit.

<b>Function</b>	<b>Non-Christian Justification</b>	<b>Christian Sanctification</b>
	Justification refers to gaining right standing with God.	Sanctification refers to being gradually transformed into the likeness of Christ.
	Gal. 3:24 - The law is designed to teach the non-	Many Christians who understand that they are no longer under law in the sense of justification, are still under the law with regard to sanctification. They assume that it is up to them to keep God's law and change.

	<p>Christian that he cannot earn God's acceptance by his good works. It does this by:</p>	<p>In Rom 7:6, Paul outlines two basic ways of relating to the Law: the "oldness of the letter" and the "newness of the spirit." When Christians attempt to keep the demands of the moral law in their own power, they are following the "oldness of the letter." This approach doesn't work (Rom. 7:7-25) and God will use the Law to help us discover a better way—the "newness of the Spirit."</p> <p>Serving God in the "newness of the Spirit" involves depending on the Holy Spirit to keep the demands of the Law (Rom 8:4-11). This should be the norm for Christians, and it is an important part of living under grace.</p> <p>Because we are so prone to serve God by our own power ("the oldness of the letter"), most of us will go through "law school"—the process of coming to terms with our utter inability to keep God's law in our own power. Romans 7:7-25 describes living under the Law in this sense, and how the Law itself teaches us the futility of this way of service.</p>
<p><b>Exposes Sin</b></p>	<p><b>(Rom 3:19,20) Now we know that whatever the Law says, it speaks to those who are under the Law, that every mouth may be closed, and all the world may become accountable to God; because by the works of the Law no flesh will be justified in His sight; for through the Law comes the knowledge of sin.</b> Like an X-RAY showing a fracture, the Law reveals how demanding God's Law is and how often we break it. e.g. Jumping</p>	<p><b>(Rom 7:7) What shall we say then? Is the Law sin? May it never be! On the contrary, I would not have come to know sin except through the Law; for I would not have known about coveting if the Law had not said, "YOU SHALL NOT COVET."</b> Here, the attitude of "coveting" is emphasized. Notice that this is an <i>internal attitude</i>, not just an <i>outward action</i>. The Law doesn't just uncover acts of disobedience, but also sinful attitudes like lack of love, selfishness, and bad motives for good actions.</p> <p>Deepening exposure of our sin through his moral imperatives is normal for all growing Christians. We should welcome this process when it occurs. The great missionary and writer, OSWALD SANDERS prayed through the fruits of the spirit in Gal. 5:22,23 and asked, "Am I more patient, kind, etc.?" He wanted God to reveal areas of his character that most needed attention.</p> <p>The problem is that Paul responded to this awareness the wrong way. Instead of allowing this realization to deepen his dependence on God's power to change him, he opts for moral self-improvement.</p>

	<p>across the English Channel – some may go further than others, but no one will make it to the other side. This is what Paul calls "using the law lawfully" (1 Tim. 1:6-11). Notice how Jesus used the law this way with self-righteous Jews (Matt. 5:17-48; Mk. 10:17-22). See also Jas. 2:10; Rom 2:14-16.</p>	
<p><b>Stimulates Sin</b></p>	<p><b>(Rom 5:20) And the Law came in that the transgression might increase; but where sin increased, grace abounded all the more...</b>  <b>(Rom 7:5) For while we were in the flesh, the sinful passions, which were aroused by the Law, were at work in the members of our body to bear fruit for death.</b>  The law "increases sin" by stimulating our sin-nature into action. e.g. "Don't walk on the grass." "No Fishing" signs like these often make us want to break the rules. It exposes our</p>	<p><b>(Rom 7:8) But sin, taking opportunity through the commandment, produced in me coveting of every kind; for apart from the Law sin is dead.</b>  As Paul struggles to keep the law by his own power, he finds himself breaking it more and more.</p>

	<p>rebellious pride. Not only do we fall objectively short of God's standard, but we also realize that we are incapable of reforming ourselves.</p>	
<p><b>Therefore it Destroys Self-Confidence &amp; Leads Us To Faith In Christ.</b> The law exposes our impotence to change on our own power.</p>	<p><b>(Gal. 3:24*) Therefore the Law has become our tutor to lead us to Christ, that we may be justified by faith.</b> Because of the above, we despair of earning God's acceptance by our good works and instead look outside of ourselves to Christ for his free gift of righteousness. See the Pharisee and tax collector in Luke 18:9-14</p>	<p><b>(Rom 7:9-24) And I was once alive apart from the Law; but when the commandment came, sin became alive and I died; and this commandment, which was to result in life, proved to result in death for me . . . For that which I am doing, I do not understand; for I am not practicing what I would like to do, but I am doing the very thing I hate . . . For I know that nothing good dwells in me, that is, in my flesh; for the wishing is present in me, but the doing of the good is not. For the good that I wish, I do not do; but I practice the very evil that I do not wish . . . Wretched man that I am! Who will set me free from the body of this death? Thanks be to God through Jesus Christ our Lord!</b></p> <p>The Law has led him to despair of being able to do God's will on his own power. Note how frequently Paul refers to himself ("I", "me") and note the <i>absence</i> of reference to the Holy Spirit.</p> <p>He realizes that while his new nature wants to obey God (v. 18a), his sin-nature is too wily and powerful for him on his own (V. 18b ff.). So he finally realizes he must look outside himself to Christ for the power to deliver him from the power of his flesh (v. 25a)</p> <p>e.g. Watchman Nee's "drowning man" example.<sup>2</sup></p> <p>Christ is the one (v. 25b) who frees us from the penalty of breaking the law...</p> <p>8:1--No longer condemning us for our sins (JUSTIFICATION)</p> <p>...and empowers us to walk in the newness of the Spirit... 8:2,4—He gives power, through the Holy Spirit, to substantially do God's will in this life (SANCTIFICATION) ... and delivers us completely when he returns and gives us our new bodies</p>

<sup>2</sup> Watchman Nee, *The Normal Christian Life*. p. 168.

		<p>8:23—(GLORIFICATION)</p> <p>Notice that this process isn't fully complete until we are with Christ.</p> <p>Note to instructor: Consider whether to go into this detail or not: It is important to note that Paul here begins using the terms "die" and "live" differently than he does in 6:1-7:6. In that section, he uses these terms in the <i>positional</i> (identity) sense. But 7:9-8:13, he uses these terms in the conditional sense as synonyms for spiritual defeat and spiritual victory in the Christian life (see also 8:6,11,13; 2 Cor. 4:16). Note the context to determine whether he is referring to our position (new identity), as in Romans 5:15; 6:2-11, and 7:4, or our condition (our present struggle with the sinful nature) as in Romans 6:16,23;7:5,9-11;8:2,6,13.</p>
<p><b>Result: We are no longer under law ...</b></p>	<p><b>... for justification (Gal. 3:25) But now that faith has come, we are no longer under a tutor.</b></p> <p>We are no longer under the tutor! Never again should we worry about earning or keeping God's acceptance by our works, because Christ's finished work has forever secured it for us.</p>	<p><b>... for sanctification</b></p> <p>We no longer need to nor choose to serve God by our own power. <b>(ROM 6:14) For sin shall not be master over you, for you are not under law, but under grace.</b></p> <p>If we try to follow God by our own power ("under law"), sin will continue its mastery over us (Rom. 7:8). But if we follow God by relying on his power ("under grace"), we will be gradually liberated from sin's power.</p> <p><b>(ROM 7:6) But now we have been released from the Law, having died to that by which we were bound, so that we serve in newness of the Spirit and not in oldness of the letter.</b></p> <p>Serving "in the oldness of the letter" is what Paul describes in Rom. 7:7-25. Serving "in the newness of the Spirit" is what he describes in Rom. 8:1-14.</p>

### Living Under Law vs. Under Grace

What does it look like to live "under law" ("the oldness of the letter") or "under grace" ("the newness of the Spirit")? Since Christians can still live "under law" even though we are now "under grace," we need to be able to recognize the symptoms of these two ways of living the Christian life.

Basically, "under law," I do it. It refers to approaching God's moral commandments *directly* (by our own resources), while "under grace" means "God does it for me." Under grace we approach God's moral **commandments *indirectly*** (remind students of our flowchart, **A Biblical Approach to Change**).

The following chart explains more practically the difference between serving God "under Law" and "under grace." The chart comes from Dennis McCallum's book, [\*Walking in Victory\*](#).

Area	Under Law	Under Grace
<b>View of the Law</b>	A set of detailed obligations that I must keep.	The underlying principles of the law describe the ultimate goal toward which God is moving me: a loving lifestyle.
<b>View of self</b>	I am regenerate, and therefore I am able to keep the law.	I am regenerate (see <a href="#">New Identity</a> ), but I still can't keep the law on my own because of my sin-nature.
<b>View of others</b>	A threat to your feelings of acceptance if they are more righteous than you. An excuse for self-righteousness if they are less righteous than you.	Means of receiving God's love and opportunities to give God's love.
<b>View of the Holy Spirit</b>	Little practical understanding of the Spirit's ministries.	Depends on the Holy Spirit for all power, motivation, and direction.
<b>The key to spiritual growth</b>	Moral willpower <i>or</i> Special experiences	Knows self-effort is futile (Rom 7:18). By relying on the Spirit, not the letter, I can gradually change. Looks to a process, not to quick-fix experiences.
<b>View of the "Means of Growth"</b>	Ways to keep or get God's blessing	Avenues through which we expose ourselves to the life-changing power of God
<b>Mental focus</b>	What do the rules require? What am I <i>not</i> allowed to do?	My new identity in Christ. My personal love-trust relationship with God. Loving others as a means of growth.
<b>Motivation</b>	Fear/threat and guilt. What will God or others do to me if I sin?	Grateful response to God's love and grace.
<b>Reaction to Trials</b>	View as God's punishment; suspicious of God's retribution.	Confident of God's loving discipline.
<b>Reaction to spiritual failure</b>	Surprised and distressed. Rationalizations, minimization, blame-shifting, and self-recrimination. Vows to do better.	Not surprised. Confident of God's acceptance & therefore can admit sins to self & others. Responds well to admonition. Repentance & return to active dependence.
<b>Reaction to spiritual success</b>	Proud and intolerant of others.	Humbly grateful. Still able to empathize with those who fail. Sees continued need for growth.

<b>Long-term result</b>	External, superficial conformity, but increasing internal defeat and hypocrisy which leads to: Growing cynicism & giving up or Self-righteous externalistic comparisons—self-deception	Gradual transformation into a person who remains focused on his identity in Christ, with an increasing measure of victory over sin. A more loving, other-centered person.
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## The Many "Faces" Of Legalism

Whenever our actions as Christians are motivated by anything but God's grace, we suffer the results of legalism.

When we live the Christian life "under law," its practical outworking can take many "faces." We are using the term "legalism" to describe these different manifestations of living "under law." We should be aware of these forms of legalism both for our own spiritual health, and to help other Christians who are ensnared in them.

NOTE: Due to the deceitfulness of our own flesh, it is often difficult to recognize our struggle with legalism, much of which is expressed in our thoughts and emotions. We need to be transparent about these with mature Christians who know us well (1 John 1:7).

### 1. Performance for acceptance by other people

**Even if we understand that God accepts us unconditionally and permanently, if we really value certain people's acceptance more than God's, we are living under the law.**

#### Symptoms:

- Anger when they don't respond appropriately.
- Unwillingness to serve unless they are present, or accept us; more motivated because they are present.
- Unable to serve anonymously.

#### Remedy:

- Focus on God's acceptance.
- Seek opportunities to serve anonymously.
- Learn to ask rather than demand.
- Think through beforehand how we will respond if others don't meet our expectations.

### 2. Wrong view of God's moral will

**When we view God's moral will as antithetical to our ultimate fulfillment (GOD AS COSMIC KILLJOY), or as demands for our**

**impersonal obedience out of a sense of duty only, we have believed Satan's lies and become profoundly legalistic.**

**Symptoms:**

- Complaining about following God.
- Lack of enthusiasm and excitement.
- Chronic inability to have victory over a sin-area.

**Remedy:**

- Reflect on the passages that assure us that God's will for us is good and loving (see Rom 12:2b; Jn. 10:10; Deut. 10:13).
- Reflect on the fact that God's imperatives are invitations to experience more of God's goodness and faithfulness
- Continue to obey God as he purifies your motives

### **3. Defective ethical priorities**

**Not all moral issues in the Bible are equally important. Jesus told the Pharisees they "strained out gnats but swallowed camels" when they emphasized tithing garden herbs but neglected mercy and justice and faithfulness (Matt. 23:23,24). The Holy Spirit does not treat us as impersonal machines upon which he mindlessly enforces God's morality. Instead, he works with each of us personally and starts with "first things first." Above all, he is out to transform us into people who love others sacrificially.**

**Symptoms:**

- Turning a blind eye to materialism.
- With our kids: emphasizing the best in sports teams and educational opportunities with a lesser emphasis and excitement about their spiritual development.
- Morality without love (cold, selfish, person who never smiles or cusses). See Rom 13; Mt 22; Jas. 2; 1 Jn. 2:7-11; 1 Cor. 13 for passages that emphasize love as the main ethical priority.

**Remedy:**

- Learn what ethics the Bible emphasizes (e.g., loving others, honesty; sobriety; sexual purity; forgiveness; etc.).
- Pray for insight to cooperate with the Holy Spirit in his work in people's lives.

### **4. Extra-biblical imperatives**

**When we make moral rules or absolutes that are not in scripture, we have created a form of legalism. Over time, these rules tend to erode the authority of God's Word by obscuring it.**

**Examples:**

- Jewish Hand-Washings (Mark 7)
- Drinking; Dancing; Movies
- Cards; Some Forms Of Colorful Language
- The justification for this is usually that these rules make it more difficult for us to sin (BRAZIL: GIRLS NOT ALLOWED TO WEAR SLEEVELESS BLOUSES; MEN NOT ALLOWED TO ATTEND SOCCER GAMES). But these rules don't necessarily protect us from sin—and they exact a cost in outreach by creating a Christian subculture that is needlessly different than the rest of society. Ultimately, we have to decide which is more important—that we make it as difficult as possible for us to sin, or that we make it as easy as possible for others to come to Christ!

**Remedy:**

- Use the Word as a "scalpel" to pare away the man-made rules.

**5. Perfectionism**

We are not speaking of the doctrine of Christian perfectionism (that Christians can get to the point in this life where they no longer sin), but rather **unrealistic moral expectations on one's self or others**. In a fallen world, we will never have perfection in any area. As Francis Schaeffer said, "If we insist on perfection or nothing in any area in this fallen world, we will have nothing every time."

**Symptoms:**

- Unwilling to try new things unless success is guaranteed.
- Everything is "black and white" or "all or nothing" in relationships, ministry evaluation, etc..
- Overriding sense of disappointment with whatever we are perfectionistic about; tend to live in the idealized past or future.
- Unduly rigorous in confronting others.

**Remedy:**

- Ask God to open our eyes to see how much imperfection he tolerates in us!
- Ask God to see the "big picture" and general direction of people's lives rather than just focusing on what is still deficient.
- Take steps of faith to try new things.

**6. "Resist" more than "replace" emphasis**

When we emphasize what God does not want us to do more than the satisfying life God makes available to us, this casts a negative, ascetic tone ("I can't" vs. "I get to") to our Christian lives that is uninviting and unmotivating. If we **focus only or primarily on what we shouldn't do rather than on what we get to do**, this makes sin more attractive. This would also be evident in how we view others' struggle with sin.

**Symptoms:**

- Lots of "Don't do" and "have to" language and thinking.
- Lack of loving output and other ministry.

**Remedy:**

- Emphasize the biblical positives: learning truth, loving others, etc. This is a real key to effective grace-based parenting, discipling, etc..

## 7. Insufficient emphases on indicatives

**We may not have extra-biblical rules, but simply don't teach and model God's grace enough.** The result is a harsh environment in which people tend to hide their sins for fear of rejection.

**Example:**

- Groups that have lots of admonition but little encouragement have this problem.

**Remedy:**

- Be sure that your teachings and relationships have plenty of indicatives and encouragement.

## 8. Taking on Responsibility in ministry that is not ours.

**Symptoms:**

- Pressuring, manipulating, controlling people to make decisions.

**Remedy:**

- Study verses about God's role in ministry.
- Think through God's and their role in ministry.

Conclusion: If we understand grace and are aware of the various forms of legalism, no one can "put us under law." We can operate under grace no matter how legalistic others might be! (Anti-victimology). Keep in mind, Paul was rebuking the Galatians for choosing to be under law when responding to the Judaizers; he wasn't addressing the Judaizers for putting them under law, though he freely admits they are wrong for their approach.

Qualify: Young Christians may need some protection here until they get grounded.

### Memory Verses

**Gal. 3:24,25\*** - The purpose of the Law is to lead us to faith in Christ

**Rom. 7:7-25\*\*** - A picture of Christian's struggle under the law

### Assignment

Read *Walking In Victory*, chapter 18-20 and then answer the following questions.

On page 165, in *Walking in Victory*, McCallum, in discussing 2 Cor. 1:9 says “part of the process before us, then, is the unhooking of our confidence in the fleshly strategies we have employed for coping with problems in our lives up to this point.”

1. Not trusting ourselves is one thing. Trusting God is another. Describe what it would look like to distrust self and trust God when suffering..
2. Make a list of potentially illegitimate pain reducers in your life. Try and not list just the obvious ones, like alcohol and drugs, but also those morally neutral that become illegitimate under certain conditions.
3. McCallum says on page 179 “Only those who know where they are headed eternally can be expected to welcome suffering.” How can reflecting on our future with God give us courage to face a trial?

### Week 6 Exam Review Guide

- Be able to explain how the Law is our tutor both in justification and sanctification, and in what sense we are no longer under *moral* law (don't have to earn God's acceptance by keeping it; don't have to keep it by our own power).
- Be familiar with a few of the different types of legalism.