

# Truth or Chains



## Mixing Law & Grace: Sowing The Seeds of Failure

“Brothers, my heart’s desire and prayer to God for the Israelites is that they may be saved. For I can testify about them that they are zealous for God, but their zeal is not based on knowledge. Since they did not know the righteousness that comes from God and sought to establish their own, they did not submit to God’s righteousness. Christ is the end of the law so that there may be righteousness for everyone who believes.” Romans 10: 1-4

Although this scripture is a reference to Israel, it can be applied to the church today. The Jews have always relied upon good works in order to find favor and acceptance with God. They still stumble over the Stumbling Stone, Jesus Christ (Romans 9: 31-33). He died on the cross to purchase salvation for everyone. He paid the ultimate price, death, for the ultimate prize, eternal life and God’s perfect righteousness. The one who trusts Jesus as his savior not only receives Jesus’ righteousness within, but now has the power to live a righteous life outwardly. That righteous life is lived by the same means he received salvation, by simple faith in Jesus Christ.

Yet today, wherever we look, the churches in America, in order to get the saints to live godly, righteous lives, are attempting to accomplish this exalted goal by putting God’s children under a legal system of some sort.

What, you ask, is a legal system? A legal system may be the Ten Commandments, a series of Do’s or Don’ts, or the application of certain good habits or routines to the believer’s life in order to produce a godly lifestyle. As well-meaning as these church leaders might be, when we add anything to the life of faith we sow the seeds of failure and frustration. It reminds us of Paul’s statement in Galatians 2: 21, “I do not set aside the grace of God, for if righteousness could be gained through the law, Christ died for nothing.”

No wonder there are so many defeated Christians today: They have tried to bring forth righteousness by their own efforts, and that never works. The old nature (self) can never produce righteousness. We are attempting to mix the works of the law with grace.

There is a world of difference between law and grace. The law was given by Moses to Israel. It demanded obedience to be blessed, but gave the person no power to obey. Grace, on the other hand, is God doing in man and for man what he does not deserve and cannot work for.

The law centers ones attention on himself. Grace centers ones attention on Jesus Christ. The law (whether the 10 commandments or any other legal system) demands that we try and establish our own righteousness by our own efforts. Grace provides righteousness through faith in Jesus Christ, from beginning to end. The law produces failure. Grace produces victory through faith in Christ (Galatians 3:11).

Let us then return to the Lord Jesus Who gave us His righteousness the moment we believed (II Corinthians 5: 21). That same faith in Him will also produce righteousness in our daily lives. This truth is taught so clearly in Paul’s letter to the Colossians: “So then, just as you received Christ Jesus as Lord, continue to live in Him, rooted and built up in Him, strengthened in the faith as you were taught, and overflowing with thankfulness.” Colossians 2: 6-7

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