

## SEVEN THINGS THAT STEAL YOUR JOY

### *Religion*

*Week 2 - 7/16/06*

- ✓ *What does it mean to be religious?*
- ✓ *There are as many different opinions about being religious as there are religions.*
- ✓ *Does God care if I am religious?*

*The book of Galatians reveals God's anger towards religious legalism and his desire for his followers to experience freedom in Christ.*

I am shocked that you are turning away so soon from God, who in his love and mercy called you to share the eternal life he gives through Christ. You are already following a different way.

Galatians chapter 1 verse 6 (890)

#### 1. Jesus freed me from... ***Perfectionism***

*The definition of perfectionism is trying to maintain a perfect performance so God will accept me.*

Oh, foolish Galatians! What magician has cast an evil spell on you? For you used to see the meaning of Jesus Christ's death as clearly as though I had shown you a signboard with a picture of Christ dying on the cross. Let me ask you this one question: Did you receive the Holy Spirit by keeping the law? Of course not, for the Holy Spirit came upon you only after you believed the message you heard about Christ. Have you lost your senses? After starting your Christian lives in the Spirit, why are you now trying to become perfect by your own human effort?

Galatians chapter 3 verses 1-3 (891)

- ❑ *Human effort didn't save you and it can't keep you saved.*
- ❑ *When you live this way you are relating to God out of fear rather than love.*
- ❑ *Jesus did not die to make me religious; he died to make me righteous.*
- ❑ *When you fall into the trap of perfectionism, your relationship to God becomes a burden instead of a blessing.*
- ❑ *If you want to grasp God's acceptance then read the 100's of passages in the Bible talking about God's grace and love for you.*

#### 2. Jesus freed me from... ***Legalism***

*Legalism is when you measure your maturity by how many rules you keep.*

Before you Gentiles knew God, you were slaves to so-called gods that do not even exist. And now that you have found God (or should I say, now that God has found you), why do you want to go back again and become slaves once more to the weak and useless spiritual powers of this world? You are trying to find favor with God by what you do or don't do on certain days or months or seasons or years.

Galatians chapter 4, verse 8-10 (892)

- *Strict adherence to rules, rituals and regulations does not equal spiritual maturity.*
- *Legalism is the focus on rules instead of relationship.*
- *When you live this way you are relating to God out of guilt rather than love.*

- Motivation by guilt is short term and inconsistent.
- Motivation through gratitude is faithful and lasting.
- Our outward appearance becomes more important than what's happening with our inward being
- The Holy Spirit should be my guide for every decision in my life!

✓ What did Jesus think about religious legalism? See Luke 11: 37-46

✓ Religious legalism will steal my joy!

*Where w that joyful spirit we felt together then?*

*Galatians chapter 4, verse 15 (892)*

### 3. Jesus freed me from... **Conformity**

Conformity is being controlled by the expectations of other people.

*You were getting along so well. Who has interfered with you to hold you back from following the truth?*

*Galatians chapter 5, verse 7 (893)*

- ❖ Conformity is taking your eyes off the Lord and looking at what everyone else is doing.
- ❖ Whose voice do you hear the most, God's or that of other people?
- ❖ We have to get to the point where we don't care what others think of us.
- ❖ Your life is to be "conformed to the image of Jesus".

*For we are God's masterpiece. He has created us anew in Christ Jesus, so that we can do the good things he planned for us long ago. Ephesians chapter 2, verse 10 (896)*

*For God knew his people in advance, and he chose them to become like his Son, so that his Son would be the firstborn, with many brothers and sisters. Romans chapter 8, verse 29 (862)*

This series is based upon Joyce Meyer's book, "*Seven Things That Steal Your Joy*"

\*Next week we continue in the series with: ***Over Complicating Things***