

**Valley Bible Church**  
**Sermon Notes for July 8, 2012**

**Legalism: The Enemy of Christ**  
**Matthew 15:1-9**

The most consistent and serious threat to the well-being of our church is legalism.

**1. Who legalists are (15:1)**

Legalism is seen most clearly with the Pharisees, the primary enemies of Christ.

The Pharisees had earlier confronted Jesus about His disciples' practices on the Sabbath (Matthew 12:1-8).

**2. What legalism is (15:2)**

Legalism is the elevation of the opinions of man to the level of the word of God.

Legalism becomes significant when it expresses itself. Jesus specifically warned his followers to beware of the teaching of the Pharisees (Matthew 16:12).

**3. Why legalism is wrong (15:3-9)**

a. Legalism transgresses the word of God (15:3)

b. Legalism invalidates the word of God (15:4-6)

c. Legalism replaces the word of God (15:7-9)

**4. Tactics of legalism**

Giving an outright statement that an area of freedom is morally necessary.

Referencing OT commands not repeated in the NT and making these commands essential for our godliness.

Using general Scripture verses to demand specific applications.

Simply implying that an opinion is a moral requirement by discussing it as such.

Arguing that something is wrong based on it not being found in the Bible.

Acknowledging an opinion that is not specifically addressed in the Bible, but advancing the opinion in such a way so that the only godly choice that exists is to agree with that opinion.

Implying that those who don't agree with an opinion are unconcerned with godliness.

Adamantly declaring opposition to legalism prior to elevating your opinion to the level of the word of God.

Stating that the sin is the motive and concluding that the person's heart is sinful based on their choices in areas of freedom.

Using rhetorical tactics to show why what is not stated in Scripture is required must be necessary.

Next time we will look at how the problems of legalism affect ourselves, our fellowship with believers, and our relationship with unbelievers.