

Freedom to Remain in Religion and Legalism

What do you do when someone wants to argue with you about whether or not to remain in religion or in the Law?

The Spirit Needs to Work

There is no point trying to persuade a person who's in religion or legalism that they need to change. The religious spirit has them so bound that, like the religious leaders that Jesus faced, they have a veil over their spiritual eyes and can't 'see' new revelation.¹ You can reason with them for hours, but unless the Spirit opens their eyes, they remain blind. Actually, this is what happened to the two followers of Jesus when he spoke to them on the Emmaus road. They had the knowledge, but not the understanding, so the Spirit had to open their eyes of the understanding as Jesus spoke. This didn't happen while he explained the scriptures, but the Spirit opened their eyes at the appropriate time, when they were having their meal together. The account states that "their eyes were opened and they knew who he was".²

Pearls Before Swine

Jesus advises us not to waste our time with those who can't handle Kingdom revelation.³ If people have questions and are teachable, that's when it's productive to educate them. If they are not, ask the Spirit what you should say or do as only the Spirit is able to break through their 'deafness'.

It's Their Responsibility

It is not our responsibility to change others people's thinking – it's the Lord's. We are the conduit that he uses, but every person has a free will to choose to align with him or not.

Every person stands before the Lord on the Day of Judgement to give account of their lives.⁴ This includes how they handled the knowledge he has given them and how they have opened their spirit to hear from him. With limited knowledge people are free to be involved in religion and legalism, even though the Lord's desire is to free them from that.

Freedom to be Religious

Every person is free to be involved in religion and legalism, but only if they do what they do in faith that they are doing for Jesus. We are not to judge or criticize them if they decide to operate that way.

The Weak in the Faith

We are to accept those who are weak in the faith, who don't eat certain foods⁵ or who observes special days⁶. Notice that Paul calls them "weak" in the faith.⁷ But even though they are weak, we are to love them and not break relationship.⁸

The Apostolic Perspective

All this is true, but apostolically, there's more – it's called Kingdom/spiritual maturity. From personal revelation, Paul knew nothing was unclean⁹ and that everything was permissible for him¹⁰. This is strange for a Jew, but also for those who still believe we need to observe the food laws in the 21st Century. So, eating anything and knowing nothing is unclean¹¹ is part of Kingdom maturity. By the same token, so is keeping special days¹² – i.e. festivals, Sabbaths, etc. Paul describes those who observe these as going

1– Matthew 13:15;

2– Luke 24:31

3– Matthew 7:6

4– Romans 14:11

5– Romans 14:1-2

6– Romans 14:5

7– Romans 14:1-2

8– Romans 14:19

9– Romans 14:14; 1 Corinthians 10:25-27

10 – 1 Corinthians 10:23

11– Not kosher: i.e. forbidden to be eaten under the Law

12– Galatians 4:10

'backwards' in maturity, regressing into things that are basic, powerless¹³ and bankrupt¹⁴. The reason for Paul's dismay and concern is that his work in teaching them to grow up in the Kingdom has been a waste of time.¹⁵ Much of Paul's letter to the Galatians is about his apostolic concern for their retrograde steps back into legalism. It was out of his apostolic authority that he was permitted to bring correction to the Galatians. **He judges their theology** and found that it misses the mark and so he began the process of correction. This is apostolic authority in action.

Protect Our Liberty

We shouldn't let our freedom and liberty that comes from spiritual maturity be destroyed by the immature.¹⁶ We must vigilantly guard against this.

The Essence is Christ

Tradition, ceremony, religion and legalism are all substitutes for reality, and the reality is Christ.¹⁷ The Law was a tutor to keep us in order until the Messiah came.¹⁸ The Jewish feasts, Sabbaths, holy days, new moons, etc., were shadows of the Messiah.¹⁹ These all point to the Messiah and tell us about him, but why find out about what he will be like and what he will do when he's already here and done it? This is what Paul was trying to get across to the Colossian believers.

We need to see the reality – i.e. Christ is the essence²⁰. He's everything and it's all about him. It's all for him, until everything is brought into order, so he can surrender it to Father as a completed job. Our sonship and our deity, and our oneness with him are what existence for us is all about. Why go back to the primitive/immature, when you can be mature and have all the privileges that go with it.

A New Wineskin is Needed

We need to be "the holy ones"²¹, the believers, who live in the Edenic paradigm²² of the Kingdom. There we have revelatory knowledge which is the *rhema* that feeds our spirit and allows us to reign with our king right now, not just in the Millennial Kingdom. For this revelatory knowledge we must have a 'new wineskin' to receive 'new wine'.²³ 'New wineskins' refers to a heart that wants to move ahead with the King's progress for his people and also for ourselves, with no hint of wanting our own knowledge or getting our own way. Without this, 'new wine' (new revelation and understanding) can't be poured in us. Without it we stagnate or grow slowly so that we remain as infants in the Kingdom.

A new wineskin is released by the Spirit to those who embrace and commit themselves to a new paradigm or revelation from the throne of God. It's a grace that only comes with outright acceptance of new wine, and following that, more new wine will keep coming to those people. Here's an example of it in operation:

Luke 7:29-30 (ISV) – *By having been baptized with John's baptism, all the people who listened, including the tax collectors, acknowledged God's justice. But the Pharisees and the experts in the Law rejected God's plan for themselves by refusing to be baptized by John.*

NOTE: The point here is the people's heart-felt ascent to John's teaching, not the baptism which was only an outward acknowledgement of the changed heart.

13 – The NKJV uses the terms: "weak and beggarly"

14– Galatians 4:9

15– Galatians 4:11

16– 1 Corinthians 10:29

17– Colossians 2:17

18– Galatians 3:24

19– Colossians 2:17

20 – See my revelation, "The essence is Christ"

canberraforerunners.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/03/KINGDOM-COMMUNITY-the-essence-is-christ.pdf

21 – Greek *hagioi*: Is usually translated as 'saints' in English, but actually means 'holy ones' (see Daniel 7:18, 22)

22 – The restoration of all things.

23– See my article "KINGDOM: The Concept of New Wine"

canberraforerunners.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/03/the-kingdom-concept-of-new-wine.pdf

Freedom to Stay Religious

Every Christian has the freedom to remain in religion and legalism, however, there are consequences for such a decision.

Submission to Religious Spirits

Most people are ignorant of the religious spirit's activities to draw them away from operating in sonship by having them please God the way they think he would want it. But why be controlled by a spirit other than the Spirit of the Living God? If a Christian was really serious about being in the Kingdom and not in the kingdom of darkness, they would not submit to any other spirit than Holy Spirit. We resist the spirit of lust and the spirit of mammon²⁴ as part of our spiritual warfare, so why not stand against the religious spirit? Jesus highlighted this point to the Jewish leaders of his day. These were people with vast scriptural knowledge from the OT, but they rejected the Messiah that their writings pointed to. The religious spirit had blinded their spiritual eyes. Jesus told them that they had kept themselves out of the truth, as well as being responsible for locking the populace out as well.²⁵ He nailed it when he told them that their father was Satan.²⁶ Why? Because religion has no place in the Kingdom of the living God.

Misplaced Desire

The desire to align with the Kingdom and our Beloved King's heart should be greater than our desire to do religious, traditional or legalistic things, even if he instigated them in the past in the OC. The Kingdom life is about what our Lord wants us to know now and do now, not what he did and said in the past. Aligning with this is a factor of our love relationship and partnership with him. Not to want to align with his desire is a rejection of his leadership and is verification that the person is divided in their loyalty to him. Jesus told the religious leaders that their traditions nullified God's intentions for them.²⁷

Conclusion

For us, we need to be in the same place as Jesus' disciples who had opened spiritual eyes that saw and opened spiritual ears that heard.²⁸ To be in that place we must be totally committed to our King as our leader and teacher, allowing him to remove any erroneous knowledge that we may subscribe to. He will then lead us forward, without carrying any 'baggage', if we'll let him.

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24 – Luke 16:13

25 – Luke 11:52

26 – John 8:44

27 – Matthew 15:6; Mark 7:13

28 – Matthew 13:16