

# Legalism Negates Mercy

“Mercy triumphs over judgement”.<sup>1</sup> The word translated ‘judgement’ here refers to all forms of judging, including the legal system of society.

Within the minds of most Christians is this knowledge of judgement: (1) Jesus is the Judge and God the righteous author of retribution; (2) The mercy of God which the blood and sacrifice of Jesus bought for them is now towards them; and (3) God’s wrath is towards those outside of the Kingdom of God<sup>2</sup> (i.e. the ‘unsaved’).

Unfortunately, these 3 points added to an OT diet of the wrath of God produces people who are very legalistic towards anyone who is not of their ilk or way of thinking. Mercy is definitely for them, but not for anyone else – or so it seems.

God however is constantly merciful because it’s his nature. He describes himself like this:

*“The LORD, the LORD God, merciful and gracious, longsuffering, and abounding in goodness and truth, keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin, by no means clearing the guilty, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children and the children’s children to the third and the fourth generation.”<sup>3</sup>*

We have been required by the Spirit of God to be merciful to match Father’s character: “Blessed are the merciful, For they shall obtain mercy”<sup>4</sup> and “But if you had known what this means, ‘I desire mercy and not sacrifice,’ you would not have condemned the guiltless”<sup>5</sup>.

Any follower of Jesus who has a measure of legalism in them will find it very hard to be merciful with an open heart. On the other hand, they’ll find it very easy to condemn and convict. I know this because I was there once, but I’ve been delivered from it.

So steer clear of those who are legalistic, unforgiving and merciless. It’s a spiritual ‘infection’ that you don’t want to pick up.

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1 – ‘J’ communication

2 – Ephesians 5:6

3 – Exodus 34:6-7 (Psalm 103:8; 145:8)

4 – Matthew 5:7

5 – Matthew 12:7