

Imperative Legalism¹

Religious legalism can be a form of imperativeness. Legalism is defined as: “Strict adherence, or the principle of strict adherence, to law or prescription, especially to the letter rather than the spirit.” Legalism is about being right, unbending, in a dominant position, which is a similar attitude to those who want to be in control – “It’s the OT way or no way at all!”, instead of “It’s my way or no way at all!”

Religion and legalism whisper to the believer’s mind: “Freedom is dangerous. It leads to irresponsibility and eventually licentiousness”. This is why the religious system is controlling. It’s a veiled attempt to control others for reasons of personal power, but under the guise of looking after the members best interests. It’s really a form of parenting the saints where they are treated as children.

The opposite to control or imperativeness is freedom. Control is anti-freedom. Religion and legalism are also anti-freedom. Our function on the Kingdom is to free-up people, not control them and tie them down. Sons need to ‘fly’ so they can be all they are meant to be.

Many, many modern evangelists also tend to be imperative in a legalistic way. Having been in their shoes I can say they driven by a legalistic mandate to convert every person they meet. This is imperative, because they MUST evangelise.

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