

Slaves to Sin or Slaves to Righteousness

■ The Bible divides people into two categories. We are either in Christ or outside of Christ.

1. Those who live outside of Christ—the unredeemed—present themselves to sin as instruments of unrighteousness.
2. Those in Christ present themselves to God as those who have been brought from death to life **and our members—our minds, arms, hands, feet, etc.—to God as instruments of righteousness.**
 - (Romans 6:13 ESV) Do not present your members to sin as instruments for unrighteousness, but present yourselves to God as those who have been brought from death to life, and your members to God as instruments for righteousness.
 - (Romans 12:1 ESV) I appeal to you therefore, brothers, by the mercies of God, **to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship.**

■ The people in both biblical categories present themselves to something. Again, two options.

1. We are slaves to sin which leads to dead.
2. Or we are slaves to obedience which leads to righteousness.
3. Note the contrast between death and righteousness, not death and life. The righteousness of God is equated with life.

4. It seems possible that some do not have the abundant life that Christ spoke of because they do not have an abundance of righteousness because of disobedience.
 - (Romans 6:16 ESV) Do you not know that if you present yourselves to anyone as obedient slaves, you are slaves of the one whom you obey, either of sin, which **leads to death**, or of obedience, which **leads to righteousness**?

■ The one who has been set free from sin:

1. Becomes obedient from the heart to the standard of biblical doctrine.
2. Becomes a slave of righteousness.
 - (Romans 6:17-18 ESV) But thanks be to God, that you who were once slaves of sin have become **obedient from the heart to the standard of teaching to which you were committed, 18 and, having been set free from sin, have become slaves of righteousness.**

■ Practical considerations in human terms.

1. Identify our old way as a slave to sin and the unrighteous and impure result of presenting ourselves to lawlessness.
2. Make a conscious decision now to present ourselves as slaves to righteousness with the knowledge that this leads to our sanctification.
 - (Romans 6:19 ESV) I am speaking in human terms, because of your natural limitations. For just as you once presented your members as **slaves to impurity and to**

lawlessness leading to more lawlessness, so now present your members as **slaves to righteousness** leading to sanctification.

■ When we were slaves to sin, we were incapable of presenting our lives to righteousness. Righteousness was not in the realm of possibility.

- (Romans 6:20 ESV) For when you were **slaves of sin**, you were free in regard to righteousness.

■ We believe in Christ, and he sets us free from our sins—he saves us. We have become God's property, so the Holy Spirit of God begins caring for us and producing his spiritual fruit in our lives. God has begun his holy work in our lives and is preparing us for heaven.

- (Romans 6:22 ESV) But now that you have been set free from sin and have become **slaves of God**, the fruit you get leads to sanctification and its end, eternal life.
- (Galatians 5:22-23 ESV) But **the fruit of the Spirit** is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law.
- (Philippians 1:11 ESV) Filled with **the fruit of righteousness that comes through Jesus Christ**, to the glory and praise of God.
- (Hebrews 12:11 ESV) For the moment all discipline seems painful rather than pleasant, but later it yields **the peaceful fruit of righteousness** to those who have been trained by it.

Excerpts from 3 Types of Legalism by R.C. Sproul Jul 29, 2016

Have you, as a Christian, ever been accused of legalism? That word is often bandied about in the Christian subculture incorrectly. **For example, some people might call John [the Baptist] a legalist because they view him as narrow-minded. But the term legalism does not refer to narrow-mindedness.** In reality, legalism manifests itself in many subtle ways.

Basically, legalism involves abstracting the law of God from its original context. Some people seem to be preoccupied in the Christian life with obeying rules and regulations, and they conceive of Christianity as being a series of do's and don'ts, cold and deadly set of moral principles. **That's one form of legalism,** where one is concerned merely with the keeping of God's law as an end in itself.

The third type of legalism adds our own rules to God's law and treats them as divine. It is the most common and deadly form of legalism. Jesus rebuked the Pharisees at this very point, saying, "You teach human traditions as if they were the word of God." We have no right to heap up restrictions on people where He has no stated restriction.

The gospel calls men to repentance, holiness, and godliness. Because of this, the world finds the gospel offensive. **But woe to us if we add unnecessarily to that offense by distorting the true nature of Christianity by combining it with legalism.** Because Christianity is concerned with morality, righteousness, and ethics, we can easily make that subtle move from a passionate concern for godly morality into legalism if we are not careful.

[<https://www.ligonier.org/blog/3-types-legalism/>]