



Lawless

Romans 6:14; 7:15-25; John 15:5; Galatians 5:16-25

Message from Pastor Martin Hawley

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The Bottom Line: It's not about obeying the rules; it's about following the leader.

Introduction: If you've been coming here for any length of time, you've heard us say that our mission is to lead people into a growing relationship with Jesus Christ.

You hear us talk much more about becoming a "follower" of Christ than becoming a Christian. That's intentional. The New Testament doesn't talk about becoming a Christian. It talks about becoming a disciple.

The first-century disciple's commitment was to a **person**, not a **creed** or a contract!

All religions point to three things: you ought to, you don't, you're toast.

In *The Abolition of Man*, C. S. Lewis lists four things that are common to all religions:

1. Don't harm others.
2. Don't lie.
3. Don't have sex with another person's spouse.
4. Care for those who are weaker.

Religion becomes about following the rules – the teachings of the church. This crept into Christianity around the third century.

We usually try to relate to God through a filter of law and rules. This creates a mental list of what God approves of and disapproves of. Then, you judge his love and acceptance of you based on the consistency of your performance.

When you can't measure up, you give up.

But Jesus and Paul taught something **very** different. They offered a different way.

Before Paul was a Jesus follower, he was a very religious man – a Pharisee.

“I **do** not understand what I **do**. For what I want to **do** I do not **do**, but what I hate I **do**. And if I **do** what I do not want to **do**, I agree that the **law** is good ...” Romans 7:15-16 NIV

“For I have the desire to **do** what is good, but I cannot carry it out.” Romans 7:18 NIV

“What a wretched man I am! **Who** will rescue me from this body that is subject to death?” Romans 7:24 NIV

“Thanks be to God, who delivers me **through** Jesus Christ our Lord!” Romans 7:25 NIV

“For what the **law** was powerless to do because it was weakened by the sinful nature, **God** did ...” Romans 8:3 NIV

Approaching God through the law is our **default**.
But it eventually leads to **defeat**.

“For sin shall no longer be your master, **because** you are not under the **law**, but under **grace**.” Romans 6:14 NIV

The Christian life was never intended to be characterized by imitation of Christ by keeping the law but by impartation.

Jesus explained it like this:

“I am the vine; you are the branches. If you **remain** [abide] in me and I in you, you will bear much **fruit**; apart from me you can do nothing.” John 15:5 NIV

Paul says it this way:

“So I say, **walk** by the Spirit and you will not gratify [fulfill] the desires of the sinful nature.” Galatians 5:16 NIV

“For the sinful nature **desires** what is contrary to the Spirit, and the Spirit what is contrary to the sinful nature. They are in **conflict** with each other, so that you do not do what you want.” Galatians 5:17 NIV

- “I did it again.”
vs.
- “I got out of step.”

Conclusion:

The Christian life is not a life of imitation.

The Christian life is a life of impartation – Christ’s life in you.

What the law was powerless to do, God did by sending His Son as the payment for our lawbreaking. Then He gave life to us lawbreakers.

At the cross, the power of sin was broken. We have been set free:
“For we have died and Jesus is alive in us.”

Sin is not my master.

NEXT STEPS:

- Memorize: Galatians 5:22-23.**
- Read and Meditate on Romans 5-8.**
- Accept. Embrace. Refuse.**
- Change a life. Invite a friend to our Christmas services.**

“But if you are **led** by the Spirit, you are not under the **law**.”
Galatians 5:18 NIV

“The **acts** of the sinful nature are obvious ...” Galatians 5:19 NIV

“But the **fruit** of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. Against such things there is no **law**.” Galatians 5:22-23 NIV

“Those who belong to Christ Jesus have **crucified** the flesh with its passions and desires.” Galatians 5:24 NIV

“Since we **live** by the Spirit, let us **keep in step** with the Spirit.”
Galatians 5:25 NIV

Keeping in step
vs.
Keeping the law

Application:

What does all this mean? What do we do? I think it’s easier to just feel guilty about being a failure and getting forgiveness. That’s actually okay because eventually, trying to keep the law will lead you to Christ in desperation. When you are tired of that, try this ...

1. **Accept** your new identity.
 - You are no longer in Adam, a slave to sin, condemned by the law, which you are unable to consistently keep. You cannot win God’s approval.
 - You are in Christ, dead to the power of sin, loved unconditionally, and a conduit for His life in you.
2. **Embrace** this new approach
 - Ask God to bear fruit through you as you keep in step with His Spirit in you.
 - Stop asking God to help you to be good, do your best, or stay out of trouble.
 - Submit your members as instruments of righteousness.
 - Ask Christ to live His life through you.
3. **Refuse** to interact with God on the basis of law.