

The Gospel of Mark
Legalism Is Just So Legalistic
Mark 2:23-28

We are by necessity a society of rules and regulations. Rules are necessary for order and peace. Groups of people, who live, work, learn, and play together use rules so that everyone understands the expectations of behavior within that group. Rules, however, should always be understood in terms of their intent and the authority behind them. In other words, every rule has a spirit in which it was created. Every rule displays the character of the person who created it. So rules have their place and purpose.

1. Jesus would not let legalism handcuff the gospel.
2. Jesus would not let legalism burden the gospel.
3. Jesus would not let legalism overshadow the gospel.

Man-made rules will never get you to God. Only Christ and His gospel can empower you to live in obedience to God. Legalism trusts that we can be good enough. The gospel calls us to trust that Christ was good enough. Legalism tells us to work harder. The gospel tells us to rest in the hard work that Christ has already done. Are you resting in Christ, enjoying the rhythms of work and rest that He calls us to in order to advance His gospel and expand His kingdom?

For further consideration:

Do you have more of a tendency to find faults in other people or to find ways to commend and encourage them? What rules do you find yourself using to judge the spirituality of yourself and others? In what way does Jesus fulfill the Sabbath? Does this mean we should ignore the Sabbath? Are there principles under the new covenant regarding the Sabbath that still apply? When it comes to Christianity, who makes the rules? Was the Sabbath law meant to be punitive or celebrative? Was it meant to be a restriction or a benefit? How can you honor the Sabbath without becoming legalistic?