

# View

## “Illegalists”

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Demanding a book, chapter and verse for Christian practice is a very unpopular occupation today. When someone dares, they are almost immediately tagged a legalist and spiritually quarantined. The productive debate or discussion of disagreements that might have ensued is then instantly replaced by prejudice and bias.

However, the idea of derogatorily labeling someone a legalist is questionable at best. If someone is not a legalist, what is he? Would he not then be an “illegalist!” If not, why not?

Undeniable is the existence of “the law of Christ” (Galatians 6:2). Does not James refer to Christ’s teaching as “the perfect law of liberty” (James 1:25)? This law must be “fulfilled” (Galatians 6:2) and we will be “judged by” it (James 2:12). Therefore, it follows that if one’s practices are not legal, then they are illegal. Has illegal become good and legal become bad? Isaiah warns, “Woe to those who call evil good, and good evil; who put darkness for light, and light for darkness; who put bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter” (Isaiah 5:20)!

The folly of such thinking is more fully exposed when using Biblical terminology. For example, if one is not lawful, is he not then lawless? “Whoever commits sin also commits lawlessness, and sin is lawlessness” (1 John 3:4). Many who profess to love the Lord will find themselves condemned for lawlessness in the judgment day (Matthew 7:21-23). Jesus died to redeem us from every lawless deed (Titus 2:14). The lawless one is according to the working of Satan (2 Thessalonians 2:9). No one in their right mind would want to be declared lawless. It is folly. Why not label one who strives to abide by the law of Christ a “lawfulist”?

Instead of prejudicially labeling someone who is striving to please the Lord and keep His commandments a legalist, perhaps everyone naming the name of Christ should make certain they are not illegalists!

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# God, Our Refuge

“God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in time of trouble”

Psalm 46:1

This Psalm’s context is a time of national invasion or calamity. In times of upheaval, there are inexplicable problems that surround us. The newspapers tell of murder and mayhem, of wars and wickedness, of sickness and suffering.

Yet, the Psalmist said, even if the world seems about to fall apart, “We will not fear” (Psalm 46:2). Why? Our security is not in our national economy or army or prosperous circumstances but is gladly anchored in our Almighty God (Psalm 46:3-5).

In crisis, do we turn to God or go to pieces? The Lord of heaven is our ultimate hope to cope with troubles on earth. “Greater faith is the capacity to trust God while not being able to make sense out of everything” (James Kok).

G. Campbell Morgan observes: “In our days of strain and calamity... [Psalm 46] opens with figurative language, as it describes the convulsions of the most terrible known in Nature, those of the earthquake and tempest, and declares that these cannot produce fear in the hearts of those who know God. Suddenly it introduces the picture of the city of God, gladdened by the river proceeding from the dwelling place of God. Then outside, the nations are pictured in tumultuous upheaval. Over all God is reigning, commanding the tumult to cease, and declaring His determinations to be exalted. The whole song is the result of the vision of God. That is the vision which gives the heart steadiness and strength at all times.”

He continues, “To lose that vision is only, sooner or later, to have nothing left to look upon but storm and tempest, wreck and ruin, the anger and brutality of the massed forces of iniquity. To retain the vision of the Almighty, is still to see these things; but it is to see them all under His government, and to discover that they also are compelled to serve His ultimate purpose” (Life Applications, p. 166-167).

God calms us: “Be still and know that I am God” (Psalm 46:10). If we see the invisible God by faith, hope and love, then visible calamity will not shake us (Hebrews 11:1, 27). God is enthroned above the world of tribulation, ruling the universe on a calm, unruffled sea of glass (Revelation 4).

Faith in the Lord of circumstance refuses to panic. God can defeat any enemy (Psa 46:9). God allows free-will choices of evil men to refine our faith. He also allows physical suffering in this fallen world to test our character, revealing this world is not our home.

“Calamity is virtue’s opportunity” (Seneca). How we respond to life’s problems will either drive us away from God in disappointment or drive us to Him in greater dependence. “The LORD of hosts is with us, the God of Jacob is our stronghold” (Psalm 46:11).

W. Frank Walton  
*Focal Point*

## The Lighter Side

A Sunday school teacher asked her young students, "And why is it necessary to be quiet in church?" One bright little girl replied, "Because people are sleeping"



A mom invited some people to dinner. At the table, she turned to their six-year-old son and said, "Would you like to say the prayer?" "I wouldn't know what to say," the boy replied. "Just say what Mommy says," the wife answered. The boy bowed his head and said, "Lord, why on earth did I invite all these people to dinner?"

### Gonguzo\*

A guy enters a monastery. He takes a vow of silence but once a year he can write a word on the chalkboard in front of the head monk.

The first year it's tough not to talk. When word day rolls around, he writes "**the**" on the chalkboard.

The second year is more difficult; it's almost impossible not to talk. On the second word day, he scratches out "**food**" on the chalkboard.

The third year is harder than he thought. He struggles, but finally makes it to word day. He writes "**stinks**" on the chalkboard.

The head monk says, "What's your problem? You've been here for three years and all you've done is complain."

\*Gonguzo is the Greek word for "grumble."

### You may have to think about some of these...(it's worth it, maybe)

Adam was born a little before eve.

David rocked Goliath to sleep.

Judge: "If you recite the Lord's prayer, you may go free."

"Now I lay me down to sleep..." "You may go free."

Samson died of fallen arches.

Amateurs built the ark; professionals built the titanic.

Noah's wife was NOT Joan of Arc.

Noah was the first man to study arkeology.

An epistle is NOT a wife of an apostle.

"If the King James Version was good enough for the apostles, it's good enough for me!" (Oookayyy...)

Paul was a not a baker; he went to PHILIPPI, not to Fill-a-Pie.

The straightest man mentioned in the Bible is the Rich Young.

### Good Deduction, Sherlock

Sherlock Holmes and Dr. Watson went on a camping trip. As they lay down for the night, Holmes said:

"Watson, look up into the sky and tell me what you see."

Watson said, "I see millions and millions of stars."

Holmes: "And what does that tell you?"

Watson: "Astronomically, it tells me that there are millions of galaxies and potentially billions of planets. Theologically, it tells me that God is great and that we are small and insignificant. Meteorologically, it tells me that we will have a beautiful day tomorrow. What does it tell you?"

Holmes: "Somebody stole our tent."

### Aging

At 20, we don't care what the world thinks of us; at 30, we worry about what it is thinking of us; at 40 we discover it isn't thinking about us at all.



Nobody grows old merely by living a number of years. We grow old by deserting our ideals.

Years may wrinkle the skin, but to give up enthusiasm wrinkles the soul. Samuel Ullman

Growing old is mandatory; growing up is optional. Chili Davis

Inflation is when you pay fifteen dollars for the ten-dollar haircut you used to get for five dollars when you had hair.

Sam Ewing

How old would you be if you didn't know how old you were?

Satchel Paige



Don't laugh...it's common in some churches. dp