



Spirit of Grace

Herald

THE MINISTRY OF DENNIS
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The New Legalism

Paul's harshest words were for the legalists. One of his epistles, Galatians, is devoted almost entirely to condemning this evil. In most of his letters, Paul starts with a lengthy, warm greeting before going on to any instruction he wants to bring. But in Galatians he can hardly wait to bring the hammer down. By the sixth verse of the first chapter, he declares with obvious outrage, "I marvel that you are turning away so soon from Him who called you in the grace of Christ, to a different gospel..." (Galatians 1:6).

At the heart of today's legalism in the church is a Christless, crossless, principles-centered approach to success in life and acceptance with God. Today's legalists would never dare use the word command, but they use the idea of principles for the same effect. Their sermons, seminars, teachings, and books essentially declare, "If you do a, b, and c, you will achieve success." Thus we have twelve step messages to overcoming addictions, ten steps toward a great marriage, eight principles of financial prosperity, six principles of great leadership, seven steps to church growth, and on and on it goes. In some cases the principles are truly from the Scriptures and can be helpful; in other cases they have been gleaned from secular books whose authors had no experience with Christ whatsoever.

Principles are not insignificant. Any man or woman seeking success in their calling would do well to study the lives of those who succeeded in similar endeavors and employ as many of their principles as fit their own circumstances. Years ago I was at a Billy Graham conference for evangelists when I learned an important principle of setting up evangelistic events at one of the workshops. One of Billy's workers taught us that "involvement produces commitment." He shared that the more people you can get involved in an event, the more committed they will be, and the more friends and family they will bring with them. This is why Billy always had huge choirs of thousands of singers at his meetings. When you have thousands signed up to be in the choir, you can be sure that they will most likely be there every night, and will bring lots of friends and family members.

It is a good principle and has been highly useful to me. I attempt



to employ it in every evangelistic meeting with which I am involved. Principles can help, but they become ruinous if they are relied upon exclusively, with little or no reference to Jesus. No amount of principles, regardless of how diligently they are followed, can ever replace Jesus – the One who declared, "Without Me, you can do nothing." If I were to attempt evangelistic missions relying and focusing solely upon the principle of "involvement produces commitment" with no prayer, no dependence upon Christ, and no preaching of Christ, **all the involvement and all the commitment would be utterly meaningless and useless.**

One of the missing factors in our modern legalism is an emphasis upon prayer. Why pray when you can employ all your principles and get the results you need? At its heart prayer is an acknowledgment of desperate need – need for the grace of God. But when the focus is on principles to follow, people are often deluded into thinking they are not so desperate. Their needs can be easily and entirely met if they only follow steps one, two, three, and four. In truth none of us will ever be able to perfectly follow all the principles we need to live a life pleasing to God, or achieve the goals God has set before us. **We need grace!** To presume to believe we can please God and achieve His calling on our lives merely by following the ten steps to great leadership, or the twelve points to successful parenting is nonsense. If the principles are God's principles, by all means follow them as best you can, but do not take your eyes off Jesus and never stop praying!

Our Gift to You!



When you support Mission Kenya this month—ask for Dennis’ book which chronicles God’s victory in his life in the area of blood sugar. This book is titled “Overcoming Runaway Blood Sugar,” and has sold over 100,000 copies. Dennis has received many emails and letters from grateful men and women who have been helped by it.

You may not have runaway blood sugar, but chances are someone you know and care about does. Get this book and bless them. The book is our gift to you when you make a contribution to SOGM this month—but you must request it.

Mission Matunda, Kenya - October 2015

Lifting Up the Savior of the World in Kenya



In October Dennis and Benedicta are scheduled to minister in Matunda, Kenya. Will you join your hands and your hearts to ours? We very much need and desire your prayers and financial support.

Every time we go to Africa to lift up the name of Jesus Christ to the lost, and to feed the believers with the word of God, we see and hear such wonderful testimonies of transformed lives and churches. God’s word works! It accomplishes what He pleases and prospers in that for which He sends it forth.

We have recently been given a generous donation of \$5,000 toward this mission, which makes up nearly half of our budget. Will you help make up the other \$5,000? Even the smallest gift is greatly appreciated!

Plus... Shoes for the children / laptops and cameras for pastors

It is our desire to minister physically to the Africans as well as spiritually. We Americans have been so richly blessed, we owe it to our African brothers and sisters to help them out in material ways, and to demonstrate that we are one in Jesus Christ. We are planning to purchase 200 pairs of shoes for children, and also bring a few laptops / tablets and digital cameras for pastors. Your generous donation will help us to bless the body of Christ in Africa and to show them that we American believers have not forgotten our African brothers and sisters! If you have a used laptop, tablet, or digital camera you would like to donate to this mission, ship it to us as soon as possible, and we will take it with us (working devices only).



YOUR DONATION BY CHECK WITH THE MEMO: MISSION: KENYA HELPS US TO CONTINUE TO REACH OUT TO THE GREAT CONTINENT OF AFRICA WITH THE GREATEST NEWS OF ALL – THE GOSPEL OF OUR LORD AND SAVIOR JESUS CHRIST! – OR FEEL FREE TO DONATE THROUGH PAYPAL OR A CREDIT CARD ON OUR WEBSITE: SPIRITOFGRACE.ORG.