What Happened to Your Joy?

> *Galatians 5:1 — "It was for freedom that Christ set us free. Stand firm, then, and do not let yourselves be burdened again by a yoke of slavery."*

The Judaizers would come and try to make new believers follow all these rules, causing discouragement. But the Christian life is simply to trust Christ.

Beware of Trip-Up #1: Trying to Keep All the Rules

- Do not measure your faith or how good a Christian you are by your works.

> *Galatians 4:10-11 — "You are trying to find favor with God by what you do or don't do on certain days or months or seasons or years."*

- Trying to keep all the rules is incredibly burdensome and will rob you of your joy.
- It's not about religion — it's about your relationship with God.
- Paul says: just accept God's freedom, love, and grace. Trying to keep all these rules will enslave you.
- Do everything out of gratitude and joy, not because you feel you have to obey.
- Change your motive from "I have to" to "I want to" — "I get to" instead of "I have to."

> *Galatians 4:15 — "What has happened to your joy?"*
>
> *John 8:36 — "So if the Son sets you free, you will be free indeed."*

Beware of Trip-Up #2: Trying to Be Perfect

Many Christians fall into the pitfall of trying to earn or retain their salvation and favor with God through their performance.

> *Galatians 3:1-3 — "You foolish Galatians! Who has bewitched you? Before your very eyes Jesus Christ was clearly portrayed as crucified. I would like to learn just one thing from you: Did you receive the Spirit by the works of the law, or by believing what you heard? Are you so foolish? After beginning by means of the Spirit, are you now trying to finish by means of the flesh?"*

- Paul says we've been bamboozled into trying to keep all these rules and regulations.
- When you fall into this trap, your relationship with God becomes a burden instead of a blessing.
- God doesn't want you to relate to Him out of fear or guilt.

> *Galatians 3:11 — "Clearly no one who relies on the law is justified before God, because 'the righteous will live by faith.'"*

Beware of Trip-Up #3: Trying to Be Like Other People

- Do not fall into conformity — this takes your eyes off the Lord.
- Your life shouldn't look like anyone else's; it should look like Jesus Christ.
- Be yourself — be who God made you to be.
- Paul says don't get caught up in trying to impress or please others — that's how you lose your joy.
- God is not going to love you more if you look more like Billy Graham. He loves you for you.

There Are Only Two Ways to Live the Christian Life

- Guilt — "because I have to"

- Grace — "because I want to"

> *Colossians 2:6 — "So then, just as you received Christ Jesus as Lord, continue to live your lives in Him."*

Just as you were when you first received Christ, you remain a Christian the same way — by faith and by grace alone.

Reminders

- Remember, you can't do this on your own — nor should you.
- Remember God's love is unconditional.
- Focus on your relationship with God.
- Rely on God.
- Don't let anyone steal your joy.