

## The Whole Christ

By Sinclair Ferguson

### Lesson 7: Faces of Antinomianism

Legalism and antinomianism are opposite reactions to the \_\_\_\_\_ core problem (separating the law of God from the character of God).

*“Although in one sense antinomianism is the ‘opposite’ error from legalism, in another sense it is the ‘equal’ error, for it similarly abstracts God’s law from God’s person and character (which undergoes no change from old to new covenant). It fails to appreciate that the law that condemns us for our sin was given to teach us how not to sin.”*

The Marrow Men were accused of falling into the error of \_\_\_\_\_.

*“Marrow theology insisted that levels of sanctification can neither increase nor diminish our justification. To the legalist the gospel of the Marrow Brethren sounded suspiciously like antinomianism.”*

In their day, both \_\_\_\_\_ and the Apostle \_\_\_\_\_ were accused of also falling into the antinomianism trap.

*“Jesus was never accused in His lifetime of being a legalist. But the issue of antinomianism did arise...Their (Pharisees, Scribes, and Jewish leaders) carping criticism against Him was that He sat loose to the demands of the law, sailed close to the anti-Sabbatarian wind, and did not keep His disciples in good discipline.”*

*“It was a consolation to the Marrow Brethren that the preaching and teaching of both Jesus and Paul aroused the same questions and criticisms.”*

True antinomianism \_\_\_\_\_ exist and has often been a problem in the church. There are some people who claim that the law of God (moral law-10 commandments) has no role in the Christians life. One of the favorite biblical texts in which they appeal is Romans 6:14, “You are not under law but under grace.” There are different forms that antinomianism can take.

- 1. Dogmatic strand**-This refers to those who think antinomianism is the \_\_\_\_\_ conclusion that the overall teaching of the Bible leads to. They understand the New Covenant to have no room what-so-ever for the law of God.

*“Great emphasis was placed on the fact that believers walk in the Spirit, who now dwells in them-and His indwelling, not the written law, rules and guides the Christian’s life...The logical development of this was to view the law as inimical to the preaching of grace. Antinomianism therefore had no relevant place in the Christian life for the practical syllogism (that a Spirit-transformed life lived in conformity to God’s law is evidence of God’s saving grace).”*

- 2. Exegetical strand**-This view disagrees with the classic understanding of the \_\_\_\_\_ of the OT law. Some believe that those who have divided the law into parts (3-fold division) have placed an artificial framework on the Scriptures. They argue that the Bible does not divide the law into three parts but simply says that the law has been done away with by Christ.

*“The law of Moses, in its entirety, has ceased to have a binding role in the New Covenant. It has, as the law of Moses, simply been brought to an end. It has no binding authority in the life of the believer. The law of Moses governed its own epoch; it does not govern the new epoch inaugurated by Christ.”*

Ferguson breaks in here to discuss the reformed understanding of the law as it relates to the three \_\_\_\_\_ of human history.

**-Creation-**The law of God was written on man's \_\_\_\_\_ from the very beginning. "Obedience to God in terms of a holy lifestyle was intuitive and 'natural.'...In this sense, John Owen wrote, the law was 'connatural' to man, and his 'domestic, his old acquaintance...his familiar, his friend.'"

**-Moses-**During the time of Moses that law was given by God in a \_\_\_\_\_ way to the people of Israel. The law was now written down. It now was externally recorded instead of simply being internally given.

Ferguson share six facts that must be considered here that will help us: 1. Now given in objective written form, 2. There is glory in it but it does not compare with the glory of Christ, 3. Largely negative simple commands, 4. Set within a historic context, 5. Purpose-to keep people distinct and point forward to Christ, 6. Special \_\_\_\_\_ given to 10 commandments

**-Christ-** "Like OT prophecy then, so with OT law, it is in the light of its fulfillment that the real structures that were always present in God's ancient word are fully revealed."

Quoting Warfield we read, "The Old Testament may be likened to a chamber richly furnished but dimly lighted; the introduction of light brings into it nothing which was not in it before; but it brings out into clearer view much of what is in it but was only dimly or even not at all perceived before...Thus the Old Testament revelation of God is not corrected by the fuller revelation which follows it, but is only perfected, extended and enlarged."

**3. Experimental Strand-**This would be those who are antinomian at the \_\_\_\_\_ level. They do not view sin correctly and think that sin really does not matter because all of their sin is covered by grace.

We do not respond to people who think this way by saying, "But you are under law". Instead, you respond by teaching that the problem here is a fundamental lack of understanding of the \_\_\_\_\_.

*"You are despising the gospel and failing to understand how the grace of God in the gospel works...Our relationship to the law is not a bare legal one, coldly impersonal. No, our conformity to it is the fruit of our marriage to our new husband Jesus Christ."*

*"It is misleading to say that God accepts us the way we are. Rather He accepts us despite the way we are. He receives us only in Christ and for Christ's sake. Nor does He mean to leave us the way He found us, but to transform us into the likeness of His Son."*

## **Chapter 2-The Law of Faith (the Covenant of Grace)**

After Evangelista tells both Nomista and Antinomista that they both do not understand the gospel, Nomista says that it appears that his good works have done him more \_\_\_\_\_ than good.

Evan. Luther says, "Whosoever goeth about to please God with works going before faith, goeth about to please God with sin; which is nothing else but to heap sin upon sin, to mock God, and to provoke Him to wrath. Nay if thou be without Christ, thy wisdom is double foolishness, thy righteousness is double sin and iniquity."

*And, therefore, though you have walked very strictly according to the law, and led an honest life, yet if you have rested and put confidence therein, and so come short of Christ, then hath it indeed rather done you hurt than good."*

*"Whereas you have conceived that there is some sufficiency in yourself, to help to justify and save yourself, you must conclude, that in that case there is not only in you an insufficiency, but also a non-sufficiency: yea and that sufficiency that seemed to be in you, to be your loss."*