

## The Whole Christ

By Sinclair Ferguson

### Lesson 8: Causes and Cures

Some people, when they are awakened to the fact that they are \_\_\_\_\_, will run as far away as possible and fall into the antinomianism trap. However, those who make this error fail to realize that they are simply jumping out of one hole into another one.

*“Antinomianism and legalism are not so much antithetical to each other as they are both antithetical to grace. This is why Scripture never prescribes one as the antidote for the other. Rather grace, God’s grace in Christ in our union with Christ, is the antidote to both.”*

*“The antinomian is by nature a person with a legalistic heart. He or she becomes an antinomian in reaction. But this implies only a different view of the law, not a more biblical one...the problem is not with the law, but with the heart-and this remains unchanged.”*

*“Both the legalists and the antinomians see the law as the problem. But Paul is at pains to point out that sin, not the law is the root issue...the real enemy is indwelling sin. And the remedy for sin is neither the law nor its overthrow. It is grace...grace set in the context of...union with Christ.”*

The real issue here is not simply that people are antinomian intellectually-it is not a “\_\_\_\_\_” problem-but that sin has so warped us that we despise God’s law in our \_\_\_\_\_.

*“Antinomianism may be couched in doctrinal and theological terms, but it both betrays and masks the heart’s distaste for absolute divine obligation, or duty. This is why doctrinal explanation is only part of the battle. We are grappling with something much more elusive, the spirit of the individual, an instinct, a sinful temperamental bent, a subtle divorce of duty and delight. This requires diligent and loving pastoral care and especially faithful, union-with Christ, full unfolding of the Word of God so that the gospel dissolves the stubborn legality in our spirits.”*

*“Antinomianism then, like legalism, is not only a matter of having a wrong view of the law. It is a matter, ultimately, of a wrong view of grace, revealed in both law and gospel-and behind that, a wrong view of God Himself.”*

However, when we begin to see God rightly through the gospel we will have a different view of the law. As we are united to Christ by \_\_\_\_\_ we grow to love that with God loves.

*“He (Paul) clarifies its (the law) holy nature. It bears the very character of God Himself. That is why he-and we-by faith can say, ‘I delight in the law of God, in my inner being.’ We must, surely, if it is holy, good, and spiritual.”*

*“We love the law because it is ‘spiritual,’ that is, it is in harmony with the Spirit. And in the Spirit we delight in the law of God after our ‘inner being.’ After all, the Lord Jesus, the man of the Spirit par excellence, loved and fulfilled the law...He genuinely loved what God’s Word told Him God Himself loved.”*

We must have a correct understanding of the plan of salvation and what it actually means to be \_\_\_\_\_. Man was made in the image of God, but that image was marred and sullied by sin. Salvation is man being brought back (and beyond) to that pre-Fall place of communion with God where we once again shine forth the divine image.

*“God salvation economy always involves the renewal of what was true of us in creation. It is true that salvation transcends life at creation in its movement towards glorified reality. But the movement is bi-*

*directional: back to created Eden, forward to re-created and glorified Eden; God's revelation parallels this- it keeps reworking the patterns of earlier revelation and redemption and progresses them."*

In the beginning God poured out grace upon man and then also gave man His law. God's grace led then to the keeping of the law. This pattern is repeated with Israel at the \_\_\_\_\_ and then again ultimately in salvation. When the people of God are awakened to the grace of God, they are stirred up with love for Him which always leads to obedience to His commands. Ferguson explains that love always has two elements: \_\_\_\_\_ and principles of \_\_\_\_\_. For the believer love is directed toward God and operates based upon the principles of divine law.

*"Commandments are the railroad tracks on which the life empowered by the love of God poured into the heart by the Holy Spirit runs. Love empowers the engine; law guides the direction. They are mutually interdependent. The notion that love can operate apart from law is a figment of the imagination. It is not only bad theology; its poor psychology."*

*"Restoration to the image of God implies this (having the law written on our hearts and desiring to walk therein). And since this is so, the Christian can no more be an antinomian than he can adopt the view that salvation is not the restoration of his life as the image of God."*

*"Neither the Old Testament believer nor the Savior severed the law of God from His gracious person. It was not legalism for Jesus to do everything His Father commanded Him. Nor is it for us."*

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

Neophytus is struggling with knowing he really is in Christ, and he is being harassed by all sorts of doubts. One chief doubt that is bothering him has to do with the doctrine of \_\_\_\_\_.

*Evan. Although some men be ordained to condemnation, yet so long as the Lord has concealed their names, and not set a mark of reprobation upon any man in particular, but offers the pardon generally to all, without having any respect either to election or reprobation, surely it is great folly in any man to say, 'It may be I am not elected' ... Wherefore, I beseech you, do not you say, 'It may be I am not elected, and therefore I will not believe in Christ;' but rather say, 'I do believe in Christ, and therefore I am sure I am elected.' And check your own heart from meddling with God's secrets, and prying into His hidden counsel, and go no more beyond your bounds, as you have done... Say, then, with a firm faith, 'The righteousness of Jesus Christ belongs to all that believe, but I believe, and therefore it belongs to me.'*

A second doubt that plagues the young man has to do with the feeling of \_\_\_\_\_ over his sin.

*Evan. (quoting Luther says) 'Wherefore, if the devil say, 'Thou are a sinner, and therefore must be damned;' then answer thou, and say, 'No, for I flee to Christ, who hath given Himself for my sins; and therefore, Satan, in that though sayest I am a sinner thou givest me armor and weapons against thyself; that with thy own sword I may cut thy throat, and tread thee under my feet.' And thus you see it is the counsel of Luther, that your sins should rather drive you to Christ than keep you from Him.*