

The Burden Of Religion

The following is a “test” that was inserted in the bulletin of a large church.

If people were like you:

Would they be in church next Sunday?

Would they come to Sunday School?

Would they be on time?

Would they bring a Bible?

Would they bring an offering?

Would they attend the evening service?

Would they attend prayer meetings?

Would they make the effort to worship?

Would they invite a friend or visitor?

Give yourself 10 points for every question to which you could answer “yes” If Your score is 100 – you are a perfect example. If your score is 90 – you’re just about right. If your score is 80 – you’re slipping. If your score is 70 – watch your step. If your score is 60- you need emergency help!

After taking this test is your spiritual burden lighter or heavier? Do you feel more sensitivity to the Holy Spirit or more pressure from the church? Paul went to war over these spiritual scoring systems as we read in Galatians 5, “It was for freedom that Christ set us free; therefore keep standing firm and do not be subject again to the yoke of slavery.” All of the things in the test are good but they should flow from a heart of desire.

But how many of us have been taught to fear “too much Grace?” How many of us suffer from a fear that if we remove the yoke of spiritual performance and release the load of guilt and condemnation, what in the world will restrain sin? What is going to motivate people to serve God?

We believe that the Holy Spirit that lives IN you will be able to do that! God is capable of motivating you! Paul said in Philippians 1:6, “For I am confident of this very thing, that He who began a good work in you will perfect it. And in Philippians 2:13, “For it is God who is at work in you, both to will and to work for His good pleasure.” Galatians 5:16 also says, “But I say, walk by the Spirit and you will not carry out the desires of the flesh.”

It is true that when you give people this freedom, they may abuse it. But then we discover what was in their heart all along. They were serving God because they were being manipulated to do so. You may have felt better about them under the old system because they looked and acted better. But all you had was a shined up Pharisee going to hell. You see, truly redeemed people have a new heart. They have a heart to follow and obey God. That doesn’t mean that they always do. Sometimes Christians stumble along the way. But they have a hunger in their heart for God.

Jesus said the religious leaders, “Tie up heavy loads and put them on men’s shoulders.” But He also said, “Come unto me all of you that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.” It is true that when you strip it all away, some will discover that they really never knew God. But others, after the load is gone, will discover the life, the joy, and the peace of Christ for the first time!