

Can Our Internal Laws Lead To A Performance-Driven Life?

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I just finished a study on our “internal laws” at the Christ-life Journey in Boerne, Texas. As I went through this study, God revealed more to me personally about how my “internal laws” affect every relationship including my relationship with God. I want to share a few of those thoughts with you.

We were born into this world with expectations placed upon us by parents, siblings, teachers, friends, pastors, etc. They, too, were born into a world of expectations. We all are. Many of those expectations were healthy, but many were not.

For example, you may have been raised in a home where the expectation was that you should make straight “A’s” in school. And, when you didn’t, there were consequences. So what did you do? You kept trying to measure up to your parent’s expectations. How did it make you feel when you failed to measure up? Perhaps, you experienced shame, guilt, inadequacy, etc. How did you feel when you met your parent’s expectations? You probably experienced acceptance, worth, self-confidence, etc. as some of your responses. Interestingly enough, whether you met their standards or not, **performance** became the benchmark of attempting to meet the expectations of others.

The result of trying to meet someone else’s standards has led us to set up similar standards for ourselves. These standards repeated over and over again became internal “laws” to us. Your internal laws are so entrenched that you feel that you must meet them in order for you to feel good about yourself and to feel accepted and acceptable. Therefore, your identity has been shaped in large part by your performance or the lack thereof.

When people come into marriage, they come with their internal laws. An example of an internal law might be that your spouse must love you, accept you, and affirm you in certain ways. As a result, you transfer your internal law on to her, and you now put your spouse under that same law. In other words, if persons don’t perform to meet your “laws,” then you feel justified in being angry, in rejecting them, in condemning them, and in elevating yourself above them.

Unfortunately, we carry our internal laws into our Christian life. We have been told that to “be” spiritual we must “do” (perform). Therefore, we must have our quiet time. We must be involved in ministry in the church. The list goes on and on. And why must we do these things? It has been so that we will feel spiritual and that God will be pleased with us. For many believers there is a nagging sense that if you don’t perform for Him in some way, He will not be happy with you. He will not love or accept you if you are not jumping through the proper “spiritual hoops.” Isn’t it interesting that even in the Christian realm we not only have to keep our internal laws to “be” spiritual but we also expect others to measure up to our “spiritual” standards as well?

The result of our internal laws is that they can rob us of the freedom we have in Christ. Paul said in Galatians 5:1, **“It was for freedom that Christ set us free; therefore keep standing firm and do not be subject again to a yoke of slavery.”** Jesus has not only set us free from the LAW, but He has also set us free from our internal laws as well. No longer do we have to perform for self, others, or God. No longer do we have to put others under our “self-laws.” We

simply have to walk in the freedom that is ours in Christ moment by moment. Christ wants to destroy our internal laws and to replace them with Himself. Perhaps, you may not be aware of some of your internal laws that are restricting the expression of His life in you. Ask Him to reveal them to you so that you can in turn entrust these areas to Him for Him to do the work. As I have experienced the Lord continuing to free me from a critical spirit and a judgemental attitude that were a result of my self-laws, I am experiencing Christ's acceptance and unconditional love in me and through me. That is real freedom!

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