

. . . Legalism, *continued from p. 1*

law. It follows, then, that salvation could not possibly entail nor promote disobedience to God's law. The opposite is true: salvation brings the believer into obedience to God's law, and that obedience is most emphatically not legalism. There is no expectation of earning God's favor with obedience, but rather a joyous, heartfelt desire to please God in all things because of His marvelous grace.

The attitude of the true believer toward God's law is beautifully expressed by King David, the ultimate non-legalist: "I delight to do Your will, O my God, and Your law is within my heart" (Ps. 40:8).

. . . Marantha, *continued from p. 3*

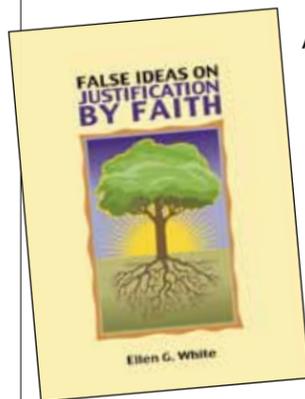
well pleased to impart to you not only the gospel of GOD, but also our own lives, because you had become dear to us." We really appreciated how James not only gave us the word of GOD but also ministered to many people personally—in counseling sessions, in their homes and after the evening meetings.

I have learned a great deal from James about uplifting CHRIST in all that we do as Christians.

For all this I am sincerely grateful to GOD, who made all this possible, and for James and Light Bearers Ministry for being willing to minister to us here in Grahamstown, South Africa.

Wishing you GOD's blessings as you continue to trust HIM and serve HIM.

## False Ideas— On Justification By Faith



At the recent Spring Meeting of the General Conference at Oakwood University, GC President Ted Wilson handed out to all attendees a copy of this little booklet. In *False Ideas On Justification By Faith*, Ellen White articulates with heaven-inspired clarity the organic relationship between faith and works. With penetrating insight that will bring you to your knees in helpless dependence on Christ, she magnifies the Savior and banishes both the myth of human merit and the myth of salvation in sin. Here you will find words of profound simplicity regarding the Christian life. Softback, 32 pages.

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- **May 10**  
Bible Study, Light Bearers Ministry  
Ty Gibson • (541)988-3333
- **May 13-15**  
ASI Atlantic Union Regional Convention,  
Cambridge, MA  
Ty Gibson • (978)368-8333
- **May 20-21**  
Arlington SDA Church, Riverside, CA  
Ty Gibson • (951)688-6630
- **June 1-4**  
Iowa-Missouri Conference Camp Meeting  
Sunnyside Adventist Academy, Centralia, MO  
Ty Gibson • (573)682-2164
- **June 3-4**  
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- **July 5-9**  
LBM Convocation, Jasper, OR  
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*Light Bearers is a non-profit ministry based in beautiful Oregon State.  
Our purpose is to help proclaim the gospel  
of our Lord Jesus Christ through the spoken and published word.*

# MISSION UPDATE

The Newsletter of Light Bearers Ministry



## Legalism vs Obedience

By Ty Gibson

**Q:** My pastor keeps hammering “legalism” in his sermons. He says, “Obedience to the law has nothing to do with salvation.” Is that true?

**A:** Obedience is not legalism, and legalism is actually a form of disobedience that merely feigns obedience as a cloak for sin. And while obedience does not earn salvation, true salvation does produce true obedience.

The Bible is uniformly positive toward God's law and obedience to it (see Ps. 19:7-11; 119:32, 97; Rom. 3:31; 7:12; Rev. 14:12). Legalism has more to do with the motives and attitudes of the heart than it does with the behavior. On the surface, the obedient believer and the legalist may both appear to comply with the law of God (Matt. 23:1-30). But in the heart and in the attitude toward others, there is a world of difference. Jesus highlighted the distinction between the two:

“The Pharisee stood and prayed thus with himself, ‘God, I thank You that I am not like other men. . . .’ And the tax collector, standing afar off, would not so much as raise his eyes to heaven, but beat his breast, saying, ‘God, be merciful to me a sinner!’ I tell you, this man went down to his house justified rather than the other; for everyone who exalts himself will be abased, and he who humbles himself will be exalted” (Lk. 18:11-14, NKJV).

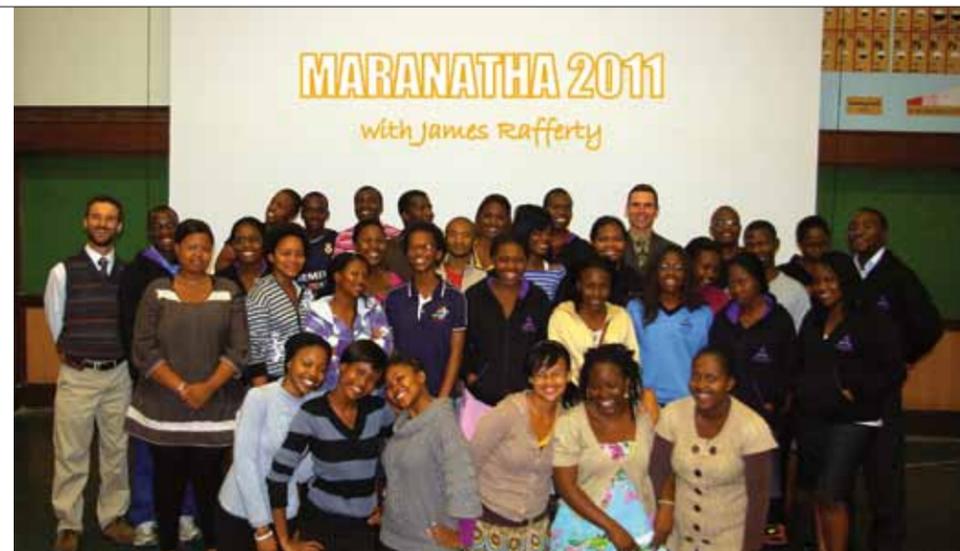
The difference between the legalist and the obedient believer comes down to what each one believes about the character of God, which is then manifested in the way each one sees Him and treats other people. The legalist believes that God offers salvation in exchange for obedience, whereas the true believer understands that God gives salvation as a free gift and that obedience is the sure fruit of that free salvation. In the first view,

self remains the center of focus and dependence, the idea being that it lies within my power to earn God's favor and place Him in my debt. In the second view, God is the center and the heart is remade under the transforming influence of His love. The first entails a merit-debt picture of God, whereas the second sees God's character in terms of a love that is both free and empowering, and empowering precisely because it is free.

It is a common misconception that “salvation” means getting me into heaven rather than hell when I die. But the Bible does not speak of salvation in these limited, self-centered terms. Rather, salvation is God's act of liberating the sinner from sin in this present life (Matt. 1:21). Sin is the thing from which we are saved. But now note the following connection: “Sin is transgression of the law” (1 Jn. 3:4). So being saved from sin means being saved from disobedience to God's

Continued on p. 4 . . .

# TESTIMONIES FROM MARANATHA 2011



## CONSIDER THIS . . .

The man who attempts to keep the commandments of God from a sense of obligation merely—because he is required to do so—will never enter into the joy of obedience. He does not obey. When the requirements of God are accounted a burden because they cut across human inclination, we may know that the life is not a Christian life. True obedience is the outworking of a principle within. It springs from the love of righteousness, the love of the law of God. The essence of all righteousness is loyalty to our Redeemer. This will lead us to do right because it is right—because right doing is pleasing to God.

Ellen White,  
*Christ's Object Lessons*,  
pp. 97-98

All your happiness, peace, joy, and success in this life are dependent upon genuine, trusting faith in God. This faith will prompt true obedience to the commandments of God. Your knowledge and faith in God is the strongest restraint from every evil practice, and the motive to all good.

Believe in Jesus as one who pardons your sins, one who wants you to be happy in the mansions He has gone to prepare for you. He wants you to live in His presence; to have eternal life and a crown of glory.

Ellen White,  
*Messages To Young People*,  
p. 410

There is not a point that needs to be dwelt upon more earnestly, repeated more frequently, or established more firmly in the minds of all than the impossibility of fallen man meriting anything by his own best good works. Salvation is through faith in Jesus Christ alone.

Ellen White,  
*Faith and Works*, p. 19

This faith works by love and purifies the soul. It works in the life of the follower of Christ true obedience to God's commandments; for love to God and love to man will be the result of vital connection with Christ.

Ellen White,  
*Selected Messages*,  
vol. 1, p. 334

### Grahamstown, South Africa

In March of 2011 James spent two weeks lecturing on the book of Revelation at Rhodes University campus as part of an evangelistic outreach to the students. The following are first hand testimonies from this series.

#### Testimony from Tendai Mutabeni

The crusade was just so amazing! We had 145 visitors and about 130 of them want us to contact them in terms of Bible studies, devotions and encouraging messages.

I really want to thank God for the strength and the reminder that He is with us every step of the way. We would have never managed to have the crusade without Him. He is just an awesome God.

#### Testimony from Francis Moyo:

The one thing that I learned from these meetings is that God blesses the people that He wants to hear His word. We had gone out in full force to invite our friends to come and hear the good news. However, on the first day the attendance was low because there

were tests that evening but still some came.

What struck me most is that a friend of mine, now for four years, when He heard the word He started to invite other people that I didn't invite. His testimony to people was . . . "Come and hear what I heard. The word that is preached has nothing to do with criticism of other denominations. The sermon is lifting up Christ. I have done my part of letting you know of this meeting. . . ."

This reminded me of the story of the woman at the well when she came in contact with Christ. She had nothing to fear. She went and proclaimed the name Christ to everyone in the city of Samaria. The people that were invited by my friend came to the meetings. It is not our power, not our advertisements, not our wisdom which brought the people to this meeting. I learned that the message of God calls the people and God uses us in different ways in evangelism. When you come into contact with Jesus you cannot remain the same.

May God bless you all (Light Bearers Ministry) for the work that you are doing.

#### Testimony from Tinashe Mashanyare:

During the Maranatha crusade, I got an opportunity to begin studying the Bible with the people who work in my residence. Even though they couldn't make it to the meetings, James came to meet and study with them. They are so enthusiastic and want to know more. We met again this week and want to continue learning together.

Inviting my friends to the meetings brought us closer to each other and I loved their feedback after the meetings, it was especially encouraging to hear two of my Hindu friends testify of how they had been blessed in the meetings. They also invited another friend.

From my study of the book of Revelation, some things were just not clear even after reading it many times. Other things I thought I understood, yet misinterpreted, but I am so happy because those things were addressed—including the 144,000.

The evangelistic meetings were such a blessing to me. I also loved the morning prayers. Through them we experienced God's answers

to prayer. The question and answer session just before the service started was also a blessing to me because it addressed issues that I may know but wouldn't be able to advise someone on.

#### Testimony from Pastor Donovan Grigg:

Dear Light Bearers Ministry,

Maranatha 2011 was a CHRIST-centered and spiritually refreshing time for me. Each evening I was touched by the HOLY SPIRIT as CHRIST was lifted up before us from the Word of GOD. After every message I heard, my heart was responding in love and surrender to CHRIST.

I praise the LORD that many (if not all) who heard the word of GOD during Maranatha 2011 "welcomed it not as the word of men, but as it is in truth, the word of GOD. . . ." (I Thessalonians 2:13).

Apart from uplifting CHRIST in the meetings, I also appreciated how James uplifted CHRIST in his daily conversation, in his counseling and in the way he interacted with those around him. It reminds me of what Paul, Silvanus and Timothy said in I Thessalonians 2:8 — ". . . we were