



A Study of Colossians

Wednesday, July 25 - Tuesday, July 31

Week #6 | Colossians 2:6-29

¹⁶Therefore no one is to act as your judge in regard to food or drink or in respect to a festival or a new moon or a Sabbath day—¹⁷things which are a mere shadow of what is to come; but the substance belongs to Christ. ¹⁸Let no one keep defrauding you of your prize by delighting in self-abasement and the worship of the angels, taking his stand on visions he has seen, inflated without cause by fleshly mind, ¹⁹and not holding fast to the head, from whom the entire body, being supplied and held together by the joints and ligaments, grows with a growth which is from God. ²⁰If you have died with Christ to the elementary principles of the world, why, as if you were living in the world, do you submit yourself to decrees, such as, ²¹“Do not handle, do not taste, do not touch!” ²²(Which all refer to things destined to perish with use)—in accordance with the commandments and teaching of men? ²³These are matters which have, to be sure, the appearance of wisdom in self-made religion and self-abasement and severe treatment of the body, but are of no value against fleshly indulgence.

BEWARE | Who you let define you . . .

v17 Therefore no one is to act as your judge in regard to food or drink or in respect to a festival or a new moon or a Sabbath day—things which are a mere shadow of what is to come; but the substance belongs to Christ.

Who determines your worth?

How is your worth determined?

What is the measure of your worth?

REMEMBER | “No one is to act as your judge” — the idea here is that no one should determine your value (your substance/identity) as a result of what you do (eat, drink, legislative spirituality i.e., “new moon” or “Sabbath day”).

Common modern errors | Legalism—measuring who I am by what I do. Whether that is following a certain pattern of spirituality (going to church, reading my bible, attending pot-lucks, supporting a church “work day”—and all this builds my case for being “acceptable” to God. Or mysticism-- that there are certain “special” ways of connecting closer to God whether that is certain kinds of prayers or special religious practices, etc. all which are a “unique” path to the almighty.

v18 | Let no one keep defrauding you of your prize by delighting in self-abasement and the worship of the angels, taking his stand on visions he has seen, inflated without cause by fleshly mind, 19 and not holding fast to the head, from whom the entire body, being supplied and held together by the joints and ligaments, grows with a growth which is from God.

Key phrase | “Keep Defrauding you of your prize” —someone is acting as a judge over the Colossians saying, in essence, “you are not cutting it.” In other words, someone is saying, “my way is superior to yours; it achieves goals which you fall short of.”

So, the person referred to sees the Colossian’s form of spirituality as defective or inadequate.

Key phrase | “fleshly mind” the care/path taken in “knowing Christ” is a very important process for Paul. There is no question of the mystery to “knowing Him” and that this relationship is unique to each person as they pursue Christ. Too often the mind can become the standard for which people “measure” their spirituality but as Paul concludes so often, spirituality is expressed in the WAY we live (Col 3). Obviously, the WAY we live is driven by the way we think but the PROOF of our living is rooted in a life which clearly displays Christlikeness.

v20 | If you have died with Christ to the elementary principles of the world, why, as if you were living in the world, do you submit yourself to decrees, such as, 21 “Do not handle, do not taste, do not touch!” 22 (Which all refer to things destined to perish with use)—in accordance with the commandments and teaching of men?

POINT | John 15:5 “I am the vine and you are the branches” The point here is that Christ is the foundation, center, focus, source, etc. of all true spirituality. We grow/mature as we are connected to Him. While certain mystical practices take us to places where we may “think” we’re at a higher place, the fact is that if we believe we are now beyond Christ, we have missed/forgotten all that is true about our original commitment and relationship with Him: He is the “vine” and we are the “branches.” Even certain practices like “don’t touch” or “don’t eat” take us back to the former way of living (OT practices).

v23 | These are matters which have, to be sure, the appearance of wisdom in self-made religion and self-abasement and severe treatment of the body, but are of no value against fleshly indulgence.

Here’s the danger: “appearance of wisdom”. So many “ways to spirituality” appear wise but in the end they lead us away from our roots. The FINAL ANALYSIS is life change. Is the path I’ve taken providing me the opportunity to grow (i.e., combat “fleshly indulgence”). Power comes from a deep relationship with Christ. Nothing else will provide the power I need to face the daily rigors of life.

TRANSITION | A VIEW THROUGH THE WINDOW INTO A CHRISTIAN’S HOUSE:
EL CAMINO DE LA CRUZ. (THE WAY OF THE CROSS)

An Important Perspective: vv3:1-4

v3:1 Therefore if you have been raised up with Christ, keep seeking the things above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God.

Remember | The Christian life is about perspective, i.e., “what grabs my attention?” If my focus is on the things around me then, in essence, I build my “view” based on those things (i.e., externals give me significance—what I have or do, etc.).

KEY PHRASE | “keep seeking” is a present progressive idea. In other words, the emphasis is on an continual effort, repeated, on going action. Note, Paul makes sure he identifies the object “where Christ is.”

KEY IMAGE | The thing that makes Christ’s throne different from all other thrones (Luke 22:30; Rev. 4:4; 11:16; 20:4) is its proximity to God’s throne. This is an imagery thing—i.e., what it emphasizes is POWER. The right hand of God was a way of expressing strength, protection and favor. To sit at the king’s right hand was a sign of special recognition and authorization

v2 Set your mind on the things above, not on the things that are on earth. v3 For you have died and your life is hidden with Christ in God. v4 When Christ, who is our life, is revealed, then you also will be revealed with Him in Glory.

EMPHASIS | This is a repeated idea from v1. The push is for “sustained effort” or in other words, “keep your eyes fixed.” Paul’s point is to have a “settled way of understanding” or “hold an opinion” or “to maintain an attitude. (Ro. 8:5; 14:6; 1 Cor 13:11; 2Cor. 13:11; Phil. 2:2, 5; 3:19).

This phrase is commonly defined as “take someone’s side, espouse someone’s cause”. This emphasizes what is important, not just a simple mystical view of Jesus or a set of rules to follow but a sustained devotion to and “enactment of a life cause” i.e., Christ in me (should) compel me to imitate His life.”

REMEMBER | You and I are so totally identified with Christ that I share in His glory (Col.2)

v3 | My life “hidden” with Christ in God. It refers to a hidden reality, what is not perceived by those who have not yet been let into the secret and so is meaningless or folly to them but is actually the very center of the universe.

Again, the focus is I live every day in the real world but the source of my power is a hidden source “with Christ in God” (Ro 6:4; 2Cor. 4:10-11; 13:4). This “hidden resource” will take care of all the challenges of daily life.

v4 | beside the practical “hidden” source of power is the reality of future things. One day what is hidden will no longer be. (note the repetitive nature of the term “with Christ” —5xs).

Paul continues to emphasize the centrality of Christ for believers, the way everything which give the Christian meaning and identity focuses on Christ.

So the hope/confidence is that one day what is “hidden” will be revealed and all the pain and suffering, difficult decisions, etc. will be honored in heaven.

v5 Therefore consider the members of your body as dead to immorality, impurity, passion, evil desire, and greed, which amounts to idolatry.

REMEMBER | It’s all about “PERSPECTIVE”

1. You died with Christ
2. Your new life is with Him (vs.1,2)

KEY POINT | How I think will determine how I act.

QUESTION | Do I act/live my way into a new way of thinking or think my way into a new way of acting/living?

Illustration | A friend who adopted a foster child from the hood—so often he needed to remind his son he didn’t need worry about certain things or fight for certain things as his new life would not demand he fight for himself any longer (he no longer had to fend for himself).

Here is the list | all connected to sexual sin. . .

Immorality (Sexual immorality)

Impurity (uncleanness)

Passion (lust-uncontrolled passion)

Evil desire (a desire for something forbidden)

Greed (desire to have more—consumption ambition—sexual appetite
Matt 6:24)

“which is idolatry” is attached to “greed” Greed is a form of idolatry because it projects personal satisfaction as objectives to be served.